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A CLAUSEWITZIAN ATTACK ON JIHADI COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

BY

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ABSTRACT

Informed by an empirical analytical framework based on Clausewitz's theory of war, this study investigates *al-Qaeda*'s strategy to highlight potentially targetable vulnerabilities along the critical links of ends, ways and means. The thesis depicts the points of vulnerability with the greatest potential to sever the critical nodes between *al-Qaeda*'s ideology, actions, messages, and audience. The examination begins with a brief survey of theory, applied methodology, and key definitions. This is followed by a review of the history and origin of *jihadi* terrorism. Based on this foundation, the author investigates *al-Qaeda*'s strategy. Based on this inquiry, *al-Qaeda*'s communication strategy is dissected. The analysis of the implications and thereof derived recommendations completes the exploration. The author concludes that *al-Qaeda's* strategy and its interlocked communication strategy, primarily motivated by fear, honor and interest, are inherently flawed, ideologically extremely restricted, and ineffective as a political coercive strategy. Given time, the malfunctioning and limited terroristic strategy will ensure *al-Qaeda*'s demise.

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INTRODUCTION

In remarks on the Middle East and North Africa at the State Department on May 19, 2011, US President Obama said that even before the death of Osama bin Laden, *al-Qaeda*[1] was becoming irrelevant.

> Bin Laden and his murderous vision won some adherents. But even before his death, *al-Qaeda*[2] was losing its struggle for relevance, as the overwhelming majority of people saw that the slaughter of innocents did not answer their cries for a better life. By the time we found bin Laden, *al-Qaeda*'s agenda had come to be seen by the vast majority of the region as a dead end, and the people of the Middle East and North Africa had taken their future into their own hands. That story of self-determination began six months ago in Tunisia. On Dec. 17, a young vendor named Mohammed Bouazizi was devastated when a police officer confiscated his cart. This was not unique. It's the same kind of humiliation that takes place every day in many parts of the world—the relentless tyranny of governments that deny their citizens dignity. Only this time, something different happened. After local officials refused to hear his complaints, this young man, who had never been particularly active in politics, went to the headquarters of the provincial government, doused himself in fuel, and lit himself on fire.[3]

Even though *al-Qaeda*'s relevance is seemingly in decline, the movement is far from perishing in the near future. January 2012 confirmed that a revolution's elections did not follow from its causes. Commenting on the election successes of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB), the political scientist John M. Owen IV argued in a *New York Times* article, "Rather than bringing secular revolutionaries to power, the Arab Spring is producing flowers of a decidedly Islamist hue. More unsettling to many, Islamists are winning fairly: religious parties are placing first in free, open elections in Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt. … Political Islam, especially the strict version practiced by

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[1] Due to transcript translations, the spelling of *al-Qaeda* varies in the literature. It is also spelled *al-Qaida* and *al-Qa'ida*. In this essay, I will use *al-Qaeda* since this English pronunciation comes closest to the Arabic original *al-qāʿidah* (pronunciation: *al-**ky**-də*).

[2] To ensure continuity in direct quotations and within this essay, all Arabic terms have been italicized and differences in spelling harmonized.

[3] Barak Obama, "Remarks by the President on the Middle East and North Africa" *The White House Office of the Press Secretary*, May 19, 2011, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/05/19/remarks-president-middle-east-and-north-africa (accessed 24 January 2012).

Salafists[4] in Egypt, is thriving largely because it is tapping into ideological roots that were laid down long before the revolts began."[5] The MB and political Islam existed well before *al-Qaeda* and political Islam should not be conflated with *al-Qaeda*. Further, as Tim Listener, an executive editor for *CNN* explains, "Even if the uprisings from Yemen to Tunisia were inspired by young pro-democracy pro Qutbtesters, *al-Qaeda* clearly wants to co-opt them–and sees opportunities in the instability they have caused."[6] At the end of 2011, the Brigades of Abdullah Azzam[7], an Islamist militant group affiliated with *al-Qaeda*, claimed that fighters from *al-Qaeda* had provided the spark for the Arab spring.[8]

Ayman al-Zawahiri, the current *al-Qaeda* leader, has recently stated his support for the Syrian resistance, urging the opposition not to count on the West or the Arab League for assistance.[9] As Walid Phares, an adviser to the anti-terrorism caucus in the US House of Representatives, explains, "Washington doesn't believe that *al-Qaeda* is leading [the revolt in Syria], but believes that *al-Qaeda* is trying to take advantage of the long-term crisis that exists today in Syria."[10] Osama bin Laden and other key ideologues may be dead, but their ideas live on. Even as they are being combated, *al-Qaeda* has found new sanctuary in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas and affiliated and associated groups rise in power. Moreover, the continued resonance of *al-Qaeda*'s messages and its ability to ensure a flow of financial and human resources aids its

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[4] See "1.4 Origin Jihadi Terrorism" for a deeper discussion of *Salafist* ideology as interpreted by *al-Qaeda.*
[5]John M. Owen IV, "Why Islamism Is Winning," *New York Times*, 6 January 2012 http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/07/opinion/why-islamism-is-winning.html (accessed 24 January 2012).
[6] Tim Listner, "New al-Qaeda message reinforces focus on Arab Spring," *http://security.blogs.cnn.com*, 13 September 2011, http://security.blogs.cnn.com/2011/09/13/new-al-qaeda-message-reinforces-focus-on-arab-spring/.
[7] Dr. Sheikh Abdullah Azzam was a Jordanian Palestinian. He joined the Muslim Brotherhood during his studies in Egypt and developed a radical Islamic ideology. He was one of the first Arabs to volunteer during the 1980s to join the Afghan jihad against Soviet Union in Afghanistan.
The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, "The Abdullah Azzam Brigades," *Terrorism-info.org*, 1 September 2010, http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/html/lebanon_e005.htm, (accessed 24 January 2012).
[8] Listner, "New *al-Qaeda* message reinforces focus on Arab Spring," 13 September 2011.
[9] BBC News Middle East, "Syria uprising: *Al-Qaeda's* al-Zawahiri lends support," *BBC.co.uk*, 12 February 2012 http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-17002573.
[10] Al Jazeera, "Is Syria's uprising being hijacked?" *aljazeera.com*, 19 February 2012, http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/insidesyria/2012/02/20122196123573363.html.

survival.[11] Clearly, *al-Qaeda* remains relevant and seeks to expand on that relevance, and despite the fact that the *al-Qaeda* threat is well known; a coherent response to the threat has yet to be devised. This essay will trace the roots of *al-Qaeda* and its communication strategy using multiple sources discussed in detail below.

The US Government's Open Source Center (OSC) is a prominent provider of foreign open source intelligence. They provide open source information and analysis primarily for US government employees beyond the usual media. The Combating Terrorism Center (CTC) is a further excellent source of primary data and secondary information. The CTC is an independent, privately funded, research and educational institution located at the United States Military Academy, West Point. Their Harmony Project Report, *Letters from Abbottabad: Bin Ladin Sidelined?,* was released 3 May 2012 and is of great importance to the researcher of *al-Qaeda*. It is a first analysis of 17 declassified documents that were captured during the US raid in May 2011 that killed Osama bin Laden.[12] An additional key primary source for professional-level reference is the IntelCenter. The US based IntelCenter is privately owned company established in 1989. The specialized on providing raw data and finished analysis of counterterrorism intelligence services.

The number of academic and popular literature written about terrorism and especially *al-Qaeda* has dramatically increased since 2001. Some of the more relevant and current academic publications include: *Fawaz A. Gerges, The Rise and Fall of Al-Qaeda, Oxford University Press 2011; Lorenzo Vidin, The New Muslim Brotherhood in the West, Columbia University Press 2010; Brynjar Lia, Architect of Global Jihad, Columbia University Press 2008.*

For the thematic nexus of terrorism and communication strategy, the following works are of heightened relevance for this essay: *Open Source Center, Master Narratives Special Report: Al-Qaeda; Al-Qaeda Master Narratives and Affiliate Case Studies: Open*

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[11] Bruce Hoffman, "Foreword," in James J. F. Forest ed., *Influence Warfare-How Terrorists and Governments Fight to Shape Perceptions in a War of Ideas* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Security International 2009), vii.

[12] Nelly Lahoud et al., *Letters from Abbottabad: Bin Ladin Sidelined?* CTC Harmony Program Report, (West Point, NY: Combating Terrorism Center 3 May 2012), Foreword.

Source Center 2011; *Jeffry R. Halverson, H.L. Goodall, Jr., and Steven R. Corman, Master Narratives of Islamist Extremism, Palgrave Macmillan 2011*; *David Aaron, In Their Own Words-Voices of Jihad: Compilation and Commentary RAND 2008; James J. F. Forest, Influence Warfare, Praeger Security International 2008; Steven R. Corman ed. et al., Weapons of Mass Persuasion, Strategic Communication to Combat Violent Extremism.*

While resources are plentiful and a great deal of independent, academic, and government-sponsored research is being conducted to collect and collate data dealing with international terrorism and *al-Qaeda*, this empirical research is largely ad hoc and uninformed by a unified and coherent understanding of *al-Qaeda's* overarching coercive strategy.[13] Furthermore, no serious study of *jihadi* terrorist communication strategies has been conducted using as its analytical framework the theories of the great Prussian theorist of war, Carl von Clausewitz.

An empirical analytical framework based on Clausewitz's theory of war can potentially inform a rigorous investigation of terrorist strategy and its interlocked communication strategy to highlight potentially targetable vulnerabilities. That is, an attack against their strategy communications strategy is not an attack against an intermediate element of their strategy; it is much more. It is an attack against the central element of their strategy. As Master Sun Tzu[14] stressed: "What is of supreme importance in war is to attack the enemy's strategy."[15] The points of vulnerability are likely found along the critical links of ends, ways, and means. This thesis seeks to not only identify vulnerabilities in *jihadi* communication strategy but also to determine which of those vulnerabilities has the greatest potential to sever the critical links between *al-Qaeda*'s ideology, actions, messages, and audience. To properly address the salient points of the aforementioned, I trace and explore relevant aspects in a normative methodology.

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[13] Max Abrahms, "The Strategic Influence Deficit of Terrorism," in Forest, *Influence Warfare*, 151.
[14] If Sun Tzu (孙子) was an actual person or a composite is not known.
Sun Tzu, *Illustrated Art of War: The Definitive English Translation*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005), 17-21.
[15] Sun Tzu, *Illustrated Art of War*, 115.

I begin the examination with a brief survey of theory, applied methodology, and key definitions in chapter one. This is followed by a review of the history and origin of *jihadi* terrorism. Based on this foundation, I then investigate *al-Qaeda's* strategy in chapter three utilizing Clausewitz's theory as basis for an analytical framework. From this analysis, the communication strategy of *jihadi* terrorism will be dissected in chapter four. The analysis of the implications in chapter five completes the exploration.

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CHAPTER 1 - THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

It is a trait of human nature to yearn for understanding of the world in which we live.
- Harold R. Winton

1.1 Theory

A social science theory is a simplified view of a portion of reality based on assumptions. As the Yale political scientist Stathis N. Kalyvas eloquently states, "Its simplicity constitutes its great strength."[16] It generally contains descriptive and causal (explanatory) statements on the portion of reality under investigation. Based on this descriptive and causal model, one anticipates the course events will follow and is thereby able to derive recommendations for action. Centuries ago, Sun Tzu advised, "If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the results of a hundred battles."[17] A key function for theory is to explain phenomena and to articulate, for example, the relationship between "self" and "enemy" and thus enable victory. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) political scientist Stephen Van Evera emphasizes that any good theory must have significant explanatory power.[18] As the historian Harold Winton asserts, "Explanation is the soul of theory."[19]

As an abstract, conceptual model, theory can help analyze the ramifications or the salient aspects of a matter under investigation.[20] One of the most notable theorists in the military realm was the philosopher and strategist General Carl von Clausewitz. Clausewitz believed that theory serves to educate. He taught, "Theory will have fulfilled its main task when it is used to analyze the constituent elements of war, to distinguish precisely what at first seems fused, to explain in full the properties of the means employed and to show their probable effects, to define clearly the nature of the ends in view, and to illuminate all phases of war through critical inquiry. It is meant to educate

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[16] Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 207.
[17] Sun Tzu, *Illustrated Art of War*, 125.
[18] Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 17.
[19] Harold Winton, "On the Nature of Military Theory," in Charles D. Lutes and Peter L. Hays, eds., *Toward a Theory of Spacepower* (Washington, D.C.: NDU Press, 2011), 19-35, 21.
[20] Frans P.B. Osinga, *Science, Strategy and War–The Strategic Theory of John Boyd* (New York, NY: Rutledge 2007), 11-12.

the mind of the future commander, or, more accurately, to guide him in his self-education, not accompany him to the battlefield."[21]

Reflecting upon Clausewitz, the political scientist and professor of comparative military studies, Everett C. Dolman professes, "Theory is always necessary when beginning a search for meaning or truth, as there can be no sense made of the world without it. It is the filter through which it organizes thoughts."[22] As Harold Winton explains, theory has multiple functions. It defines, categorizes, connects, anticipates, and it explains based upon its simplified view of a portion of reality. Winton claims, "Theory's first task is to define the field of study under investigation. … In visual terms, this defining act draws a circle and declares that everything inside the circle is encompassed by the theory, while everything outside is not."[23] After introducing the limiting factor of rationality to his theory of war, Clausewitz implicitly draws his circle around those elements encompassed by his theory of war as depicted the following Figure 1,[24] when he says, "War is not a mere act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political activity with other means."[25]

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[21] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War, Indexed Edition, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 141.
[22] Everett C. Dolman, *Pure Strategy: Power and Principle in the Space and Information Age* (London: Frank Cass, 2005), 12.
[23] Winton, "On the Nature of Military Theory," 19.
[24] Winton, "On the Nature of Military Theory," 19.
Source of picture: http://infoportal-schwaben.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/generalleutnant-gerhard-von-scharnhorst-1813.jpg
[25] Clausewitz, *On War*, 87.

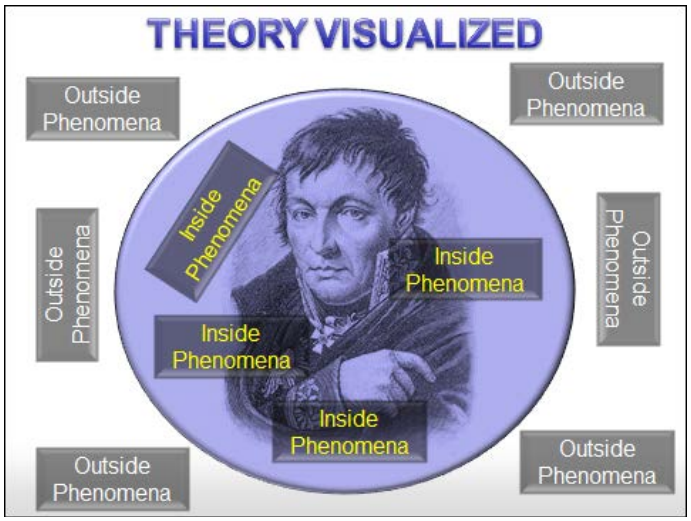

Figure 1 VISUALIZATION OF THEORY OF WAR
Source Harold Winton, On the Nature of Military Theory

The second task of theory is to dissect the field of study into its constituent parts and categorize them in some useful taxonomy. What Winton is advocating, in a sense, is the perfect reductionism of Descartes and Newton. The reductionism by theory provides the foundation to illuminate the essence of sought knowledge in an interactively complex social system like warfare.[26] If one understands the pieces, one understands the whole.[27] To illustrate, Clausewitz taught to divide war into its dynamic, temporal phases-planning and conduct-and its two levels-tactics and strategy.[28] Additionally, theory connects the area under investigation to associated fields of study. Furthermore, theory in the realm of social sciences anticipates, always leaving uncertainties due to the complexities of human interaction.[29] However, the most important function is to explain. Emphasizing this

[26] Complexity theory says precisely the opposite; reductionism in interactively complex (as opposed to structurally complex) social systems cannot reveal the nature of the system since behaviors emerge from the interaction between elements rather than from the characteristics of the individual elements. For a deeper discussion on complexity theory see:
M. Mitchell Waldrop, *Complexity: The Emerging Science at the Edge of Order and Chaos* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster 1992).
[27] Winton, "On the Nature of Military Theory," 19-35.
[28] Clausewitz, *On War,* 231.
[28] Clausewitz, *On War,* 128.
[29] Winton, "On the Nature of Military Theory," 19-22.

significance, Winton states, "Theory without explanatory value is like salt without savor—it is worthy only of the dung heap."[30]

The real world is far too complex to contemplate all variables. Therefore, no theory can completely reproduce reality.[31] Consequently, any theory will deviate from reality in some way, leaving room for evolution of theory. As Harold Winton states, "Theories tend to evolve in response to two stimuli: either new explanations are offered and subsequently verified that more accurately explain an existing reality, or the field of study itself changes, requiring either new explanations or new categories."[32] In awareness of these limitations, Clausewitz's theory of war will serve for this investigation as methodological foundation.

1.2 Methodology

Using Clausewitz's theory of war, discussed below, as a basis for an analytical framework, this paper conducts a comprehensive study of *al-Qaeda* terrorist strategy. Clausewitz expressed, "It is precisely that inquiry which is the most essential part of any theory … It is an analytical investigation leading to a close acquaintance with the subject."[33] The reductionist analytical model of this thesis, based on the foundations of Winton, Newton, and Descartes, enables dissecting terrorist strategies into smaller elements. Descartes, who in his *Discourse on Method* resolved "to divide all the difficulties under examination into as many parts as possible, and as many as [are] required to solve them in the best way" and to begin investigations "with the simplest and most easily understood objects, and gradually ascending, as it were step by step, to the knowledge of the most complex"[34] guides this investigation. This allows the analyst to more effectively detect inconsistencies and contradictions between political ends, violent ways, and terrorist means by reductionism. Clausewitz left room at the epicenter of his theory of war for multiple forms of political violence such as terrorism in his concept of

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[30] Winton, "On the Nature of Military Theory," 21.
[31] Winton, "On the Nature of Military Theory," 22.
[32] Winton, "On the Nature of Military Theory," 20.
[33] Clausewitz, *On War*, 231.
[34] Rene Descartes, *A Discourse on Method*, trans. Ian Maclean (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2006), 17.

the paradoxical trinity. It is composed of means of primordial violence, hatred, and enmity acting on each other in multifarious ways leveraging fear to achieve political interests.[35]

Clausewitz's wide-ranging military theory begins with a general definition of war. As a basic starting point, he created a highly abstract model of war by drastically reducing its complexity in his characterization. The war progresses predictably in the direction of uncontrolled escalation of violence. This type of war, absolute war, has no restrictions and no historical precedent. It identifies tendencies that are present in any potential real war. He then increases the complexity of his theoretical model of war by gradually relaxing the original assumptions and abstractions; he thus brings his theory closer to a more realistic vision he calls real war. Clausewitz concludes his analysis not with a new definition of war, but with a complex theory: "War is not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means."[36]

I will use a reductive approach informed by a Clausewitzian theory of conflict and war to design conceptual building blocks for an empirical model of *jihadi* terroristic strategies and their corresponding communication strategy. This model divides terrorist strategies and the corresponding communication strategies into smaller elements. Thereby, I can systematically detect inconsistencies and contradictions between political ends, violent ways, and terrorist means.

[35] Clausewitz, *On War*, 89; Winton, "On the Nature of Military Theory," 26.
[36] Clausewitz. *On War*, 87.

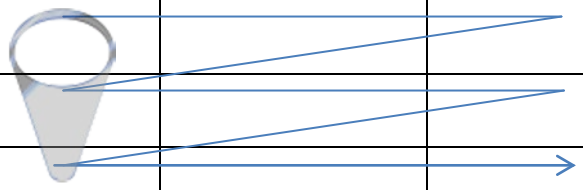
ACTOR			
LEVEL	ENDS (Goals/Objects)	WAYS (Concepts/Ideology)	MEANS (Tools/Resources)
Grand Strategy			
Strategy			
Tactic/Action			

Table 1. ANALYTICAL ACTOR MODEL
Source: Rasmus Beckmann

A schematic description of this analytic approach is shown above in Table 1: Analytic Actor Model.[37] The model can be used for strategic design of ends, ways and means (left to right) and for systematically analyzing and drawing conclusions regarding tactical action, tracing those actions back to grand strategy. That is, the reductionism employed is assumed to operate in both directions. Grand strategy disaggregates into a collection of coherently connected tactical actions, and actions aggregate into an instrumental attempt to achieve grand strategic means.[38] The ways and means of the higher level serve as the end for the lower level. The interests based ends (goals, objectives) at each level describe what is to be accomplished. The ways (concepts/ideology) explain how the ends are to be reached. The means (tools/resources) describe the logistical and support modalities that are designated for the pursuing the strategic concept.[39] For example, *al-Qaeda's* end is a global caliphate, which it aims to reach by the way of uniting the global Muslim population through the means of terror.

For analysis, one can go in reverse order (from right to left). Did the chosen actions, tactics, and strategies support achieving the grand strategy? The illustration depicts the analytical framework. The boxes divide the different, interrelated levels of

[37] The analytical actor model is based upon a model by Rasmus Beckmann, "Clausewitz, Terrorismus und die NATO-Antiterrorstrategie: Ein Modell strategischen Handelns [Clausewitz, Terrorism and the NATO-Anti Terrorism Strategy: A Strategic Acting Model]," *AIPA University Cologne*, March 2008, 1-24.
[38] Beckmann, "Clausewitz, Terrorismus und die NATO-Antiterrorstrategie," 1-24.
[39] Harry R. Yarger, *Strategy and National Security Professional-Strategic Thinking and Strategy Formulation in the 21ST Century* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008), 155-156.

grand strategy, strategy and tactics/actions. The political purpose funnels through the vertical levels and must be operationalized according to the diverse needs of these levels (funnel depicted in Table 1). The upper level consists of the concrete ways and means to each specific objective of the lower layer (the zigzag line depicted in Table 1).[40]

1.3 Definitions

Clear and consistent definitions for key terms are of fundamental importance in any analysis. As Confucius said: "If names be not correct, language is not in accordance with the truth of things. If language be not in accordance with the truth of things, affairs cannot be carried on to success."[41] Of course, definitions occasionally prompt as many questions as they answer and rarely enjoy general academic acceptance, but the definitions given here will establish a solid foundation for this work and will underpin subsequent chapters.

Since terrorism is essentially a communication strategy, the terms strategy and strategic communication need clarification before I can define terrorism. Strategic decision-making is concerned with purpose and processes. It strives for continuity. The art of strategy seeks to manipulate boundaries. As Dolman eloquently characterized it, "Strategy is confined only by the event horizon of possibilities, a horizon which expands anew with every action. A potentially unlimited panorama of choices may be revealed with the next moment. There is no beginning or end for the strategist: there is only more, or less."[42] This perspective on strategy is not far from that of the Nobel Prize winning economist Thomas Schelling who, in his seminal work *Strategy of Conflict*, wrote, "Strategy is not concerned with the efficient application of force but with the exploitation of potential force" and with enough force, one may not even need to bargain.[43] Based upon this characterization of strategy by Dolman and Schelling grand strategy in the context of this paper is defined as the process by which all the means available to the

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[40] Beckmann, "Clausewitz, Terrorismus und die NATO-Antiterrorstrategie,", 1-24.
[41] Confucius, *The Analects of Confucius*, tr. James Legge (Adelaide, Australia: eBooks@Adelaide), Book 13, Verse 3, http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/c/confucius/c748a/.
[42] Dolman, *Pure Strategy*, 13.
[43] Thomas C. Schelling, *Strategy of Conflict* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA, 1960), 5; Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, 2ed ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 1.

terrorists are considered in pursuit of a continuing political influence.[44] With this definition for grand strategy in mind, strategy is defined as a plan to provide continuing advantage to achieve the ends of policy.[45]

Based on the above, I define communication strategy as the systematic planning and realization of information flow, communication, media development, and image care with a long-term horizon. It plans for transmitting deliberate messages through the most suitable media to designated audiences at the appropriate time to contribute to an overarching grand strategy to achieve continuing advantage. It has to bring three factors into balance: the messages, the media channels, and the local and global audience, including both intended and unintended audiences.[46]

The discipline of terrorism research is relatively young and therefore has no generally accepted academic definition for *terrorism.* Its roots can be traced back at least to the Peloponnesian War.[47] Twenty-five hundred years ago, in reflection upon the use of force between city-states, the ancient Greek historian Thucydides,[48] son of Melesias reporting his views of Athenian political and military views wrote, "Right, as the world goes, is only in question between equals in power, while the strong do what they can and

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[44] Dolman, *Pure Strategy*, 26.
[45] Dolman, *Pure Strategy*, 6.
[46] Carsten Bockstette, "Terrorist Exploit Information Technologies", *per Concordiam Journal of European Security and Defense Issues*, vol. 1 issue 3 (October 2010), 11-12.
[47] Throughout history, power has been exerted via terror. Without reaching back to prehistory, which was a terrifying insecure state of nature, the first Mesopotamian Empire was founded on terror. Some Historians point out that the term terror has its origins in the French revolution, but the principal as a far broader phenomenon reaches back into the time of recorded history. The use of terroristic actions as description of ruthless illegitimate use of violence and often with a religious dimension and political aims in human antiquity cannot be exactly dated.
Gérard Chaliand and Arnaud Blin, *The History of Terrorism-From Antiquity to Al-Qaeda* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007), vii-viii.
[48] Thucydides also serves a point of reference to non-realist interpretations in international relations theory. For example, Laurie M. Johnson Bagby argues that "a close reading of Thucydides will show that he does not agree with some of the most important emphases and conclusions of classical realist" and that "although there is some evidence to suggest that Thucydides understood the influence of international structure on the state behavior leading up to and during the Peloponnesian War. He cannot be completely identified with neorealism either."
Laurie M. Johnson Bagby, "The Use and Abuse of Thucydides in International Relations," *International Organization* 48, no. 1 (Winter 1994): 131-153. In similar fashion, Richard Ned Lebow argues that "Thucydides is a founding father of constructivism."
Richard Ned Lebow "Thucydides the Constructivist," *American Political Science Review* 95, no. 3 (September 2001): 547-560.

the weak suffer what they must."[49] Motivated by "fear, honor, and interest," inter- and inner-state coercion[50] using violence dominated the anarchical international order.[51] Terrorism, as a tool of asymmetric conflict is fundamentally a rejection of this idea.[52] A terrorist (or other "weak" actor) takes the position that the strong do what they can, and so do the weak, exploiting the vacuum of anarchy to fight their war. However, they share fundamentally the same motivators: fear, honor and interest.

In his 1642 book *De Cive*, Thomas Hobbes described the state of human nature as *Bellum omnium contra omnes* (A war of all against all, or a state of anarchy).[53] Later, in 1651, he reiterated this position in *Leviathan,* using the English phase "*war of all against all*."[54] His books detailed a thought experiment that placed people in uncivilized environments and asked what would happen in such circumstances. In these situations, individuals have a natural right to freely do as they please, including the use of deadly force to preserve their life, which is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short."[55] This is nothing more than an extreme state of individual self-help anarchy impelling the use of brute force for survival. As the political scientist Kenneth Waltz explains, "Self-help is necessarily the principle of action in an anarchic order."[56] According to Hobbes, to minimize insecurity people choose to enter a social contract, giving up some of their freedoms in exchange for order and peace. "[E]very man ought to endeavor peace, as far as he has hope of obtaining it."[57] According to Hobbes, "[A] man be willing, when

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[49] Robert B Strassler, ed. *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*. (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1996), 352.
[50] In this essay, I use Thomas C. Schelling's understanding of the term *coercion*.
Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, x.;
Anarchical in the sense of *absence of government* as Hedley Bull depicts it.
Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society–A Study of Order in World Politics 3rd ed.* (New York, NJ: Columbia University Press, 2002), 49.
[51] Strassler, *Landmark Thucydides*, 1.76, 43.
[52] For a deviating view and a different focus see Stathis N. Kalyvas:
Kalyvas, *Logic of Violence in Civil War*.
[53] Thomas Hobbes, *De Cive*, (London, GB: J.C. for R. Royston, at the Angel in Ivie−Lane 1642), 11. http://www.unilibrary.com/ebooks/Hobbes,%20Thomas%20-%20De%20Cive.pdf
[54] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan or the Matter, Forme, & Power of a Common-Wealth Ecclesiasticall and Civill*, (London, GB: Andrew Crooke, at the Green Dragon, 1651), 11.http://socserv.mcmaster.ca/econ/ugcm/3ll3/hobbes/Leviathan.pdf
[55] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 78.
[56] Waltz, Kenneth. *Theory of International Politics*. (Boston: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1979), 111.
[57] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 80.

others are so too, as far forth as for peace and defence of himself he shall think it necessary, to lay down this right to all things; and be contented with so much liberty against other men as he would allow other men against himself."[58] Hobbes provided a solution to his pessimistic prognosis. Through civil institutions (the instrument), as authorized by the people through implicit and explicit social contract, governments (the agents) establish a legitimate monopoly on the use of force. Hobbes used his thought experiment to test the legitimacy of state sovereignty as guarantor of social order. Once established, governments mitigate the effects of the state of nature at the individual level and enforce the mandates of the social contract. Between nations, however, no such power exists; therefore, states have rights of self-preservation, including the use of brute force (i.e., war). Hobbes saw emerging states confronting each other in a social and moral vacuum. Motivated by fear, honor and interest, this vacuum establishes the theoretical room for interstate and symmetric conflict as well as for state terror and asymmetrical conflicts (i.e., irregular warfare and terrorism) as we understand them today.[59]

This Hobbesian understanding of the nation-state is reflected in the Peace of Westphalia. The Peace of Westphalia was a series of peace treaties signed between May and October 1648 in Osnabrück and Münster, Germany. These treaties solidified an agreement regarding the rights of individual states to determine the religion of their respective populations according to the principle *cuijus region, eijus religio.*[60] They also codified the definitions of internal and external sovereignty and clarified the concept of state autonomy, including under sovereignty the right to exert political authority over a defined geographic space. That is, under the terms of these treaties, the state is the ultimate authority over a given territory and all its inhabitants. The Peace of Westphalia

[58] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 80.
[59] One could also argue that if terrorism is crime, than an act can only be considered criminal if it occurs in an environment regulated by some social contract. Therefore, there must be a Leviathan to sit in judgment on the act. Therefore, if terrorism is criminal, it is not the vacuum that defines it but rather the absence of the vacuum.
[60] Latin for *whose realm, his religion.*

therefore established the principles of *raison d'état* and state sovereignty in the seventeenth century.[61]

In establishing these principles, however, the Peace of Westphalia also inadvertently established the roots of modern terrorism. Terror as an instrument has been used for a long time. It is a parasitic culmination of long-term human history. City-states used it against each other in the Peloponnesian War and nation-states have used it against their enemies and even their own populations.[62] As the terrorism expert Audrey Kurth Cronin states, "Over the course of recent history, terrorism has been consistently tied to the evolving politics and identity of the state, steadily gaining in its capacity to draw power from the Western nation-state and moving from a peripheral nuisance to a central strategic threat."[63]

Even as the methods of terrorism have evolved over the centuries, the term itself first appeared in the European languages in the wake of the French Revolution of 1789. As the political scientist Adam Roberts explains, "The first meaning of the word 'terrorism', as recorded by the Académie Française in 1798, was 'system or rule of terror'. … During the 19th century, terrorism underwent a fateful transformation, coming to be [mainly] associated, as it still is today, with non-governmental groups."[64] One man's terrorist can very well be another's freedom fighter, especially if the nation-state utilizes a system or rule of terror. In this case, one speaks of state-terrorism.

Founded on one of the three prime motivators enumerated by Thucydides, fear, the word *terror* comes from the Latin word *terrere*, which means to frighten or scare–or to "attack the mind of the enemy" as Sun Tzu elegantly states.[65] Terrorism is a type of

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[61] French for *reason of state*; Gregory Brown, "Western Civilization II: European History Since 1648," University of Nevada, http://faculty.unlv.edu/gbrown/westernciv/wc201/wciv2c10/wciv2c10lsec2.html
[62] Audrey Kurth Cronin, *How Terrorism Ends-Understanding The Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2009), 3.
[63] Audrey Kurth Cronin, *How Terrorism End-Understanding The Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2009), 3.
[64] Adam Roberts, "The Changing Faces of Terrorism," *BBC.co.uk*, 27 August 2002), http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/recent/sept_11/changing_faces_02.shtml.
[65] Sun Tzu, *Illustrated Art of War*, 64.

irregular warfare.[66] And as the Yale political scientist Stathis N Kalyvas suggests, terroristic violence[67] is to a certain extent a reflection of human nature, as argued by Thucydides and Hobbes.[68]

For this essay, I define terrorism as political violence in an asymmetrical conflict that induces fear through the destruction of combat and noncombatant targets or iconic symbols. Such acts transmit messages—intended and unintended—to local, national, and global audiences. The technique of terrorism is to exploit the media to achieve maximum publicity as a force multiplier to coerce targeted audience(s) in pursuit of grand political strategy, the terrorists' primary interest.[69] The aim of this coercive force is to hurt and to exploit an audience's wants and fears: "To be coercive, violence has to be anticipated and it has to be avoidable by accommodation … The power to hurt is bargaining power."[70] Schelling explains, "Brute force can only accomplish what requires no collaboration."[71]

Terrorists do not primarily aim at producing maximum physical damage via brute force. They aim for the greatest possible psychological effect. As Clausewitz wrote, "For psychological forces exert a decisive influence on the elements involved in war."[72] Sun Tzu's theory is also apt. He claimed, "The first of [the five fundamental] factors is moral influence … by moral influence I mean that which causes the people to be in

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[66] Terrorism as used in this essay is a type of irregular warfare as James D. Kiras defines it: "The use of violence by sub-state actors or groups within states for political purposes of achieving power, control and legitimacy, using unorthodox or unconventional approaches to warfare owing to a fundamental weakness in resources or capabilities." For a detailed discussion of irregular warfare see:
James D. Kiras, "Irregular Warfare," in David Jordan, James D. Kiras *Understanding Modern Warfare* (Cambridge, GB: Cambridge University Press 2008), 224-291.
David Jordan, James D. Kiras, David J. Lonsdale, Ian Speller, Christopher Tuck, C. Dale Walton, *Understanding Modern Warfare* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press 2008), 224-291, 232.
[67] I this essay, I use Stathis N. Kalyvas understanding of the term violence: "Violence is the deliberate infliction of harm on people." Kalyvas, *Logic of Violence in Civil War*, 19.
[68] Kalyvas, *Logic of Violence in Civil War*, 388.
[69] This definition is derived of the developed strategic communication definition in:
Bockstette, "Terrorist Exploit Information Technologies", 4 and based upon Bruce Hoffman's description of terrorism in:
Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism*-Rev. and expanded ed. (New York, NY: Columbia University Press 2006), 40-41.
[70] Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, 2-3.
[71] Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, 8.
[72] Clausewitz, *On War*, 127.

harmony with their leaders, so that they will accompany them in life and unto death without fear of mortal peril."[73] Terrorists seek to destroy their enemies' harmony and prestige, the second key motivator, while ensuring and enhancing their own in striving to achieve their interests by instilling fear. *Al-Qaeda* resorts to terrorism exclusively out of necessity because its lacks other options in exploiting the methods and means of violence due to its inability of effectively harnessing local discontent and grievances and transforming them to a greater range of irregular warefare capabilities.[74] As the *al-Qaeda* strategist Abu Mus'ab al-Suri says, "Yes, we are terrorists towards God's Enemies. We have already struck terror in them, and we have made them tremble in their holes, in spite of the hundreds of thousands of agents in their security agencies, praise God, and this happened after they terrorized the countries and mankind, and even put fear into the embryos in their mothers' bellies."[75]

Terrorist attacks seem to adhere to the recommendations of Clausewitz, Sun Tzu, and Jomini. Clausewitz wrote, "Only three things seem to us to produce decisive advantages: Surprise, the benefit of terrain, and concentric attack."[76] Terrorists regularly exploit the benefit of terrain and perpetrate their attack with exemplary economy of force.[77] Terrorist attacks are usually a surprise, which Sun Tzu also advocated, noting that, "Against those skilled in attack, an enemy does not know where to defend."[78] They also have a very favorable ratio of space to forces at a usually undefended point. Tactically they seek to avoid battle, thereby reversing the normal practice of warfare.[79]

Terrorists use the public as a vehicle and a communication channel to influence political decision makers.[80] Terrorists at the opponents the political center of gravity to

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[73] Sun Tzu, *Illustrated Art of War*, 91-92.
[74] Kiras, "Irregular Warfare," 271.
[75] *Abu Mus'ab al-Suri* quoted in Brynjar Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad-The Life of al-Qaida Strategist Abu Mus'ab al-Suri* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2008), 387.
[76] Clausewitz, *On War*, 360.
[77] *Economy of force* in the sense described by: Basil Henry Liddell Hart, *Strategy*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Meridian, 1991), 322-323.
[78] Sun Tzu, *Illustrated Art of War*, 146.
[79] Hart, *Strategy*, 365-366.
[80] Angela Gendron, "Trends in Terrorism Series: Al-Qaeda: Propaganda and Media Strategy," *ITAC Presents*, vol. 2007-2 (2007), 10, http://www.itac.gc.ca/pblctns/tc_prsnts/2007-2-eng.pdf.
Bockstette, "Terrorist Exploit Information Technologies", 11-12.

which, according to Clausewitz, all energy "should be directed … Out of these characteristics a certain center of gravity develops, the hub of all power and movement, on which everything depends."[81] Clausewitz continued, "The task of reducing the sources of enemy strength to single center of gravity will depend on the distribution of the enemy's political power."[82] Jomini also advised to focus on the center of gravity. He explained, "I think the name of decisive strategic point should be given to all those which are capable of exercising a marked influence either upon the result of the campaign or upon a single enterprise … All capitals are strategic points for the double reason that they are not only centers of communications, but also the seats of power and government."[83] Each of Clausewitz, Sun Tzu, and Jomini, despite their many differences, impart the same criticality to the identification of decisive points and the fundamental role of strategy in identifying and targeting them. Further, Jomini highlights for us the criticality of communications, emphasizing this as one significant reason for considering all capitals as strategic points or, in the parlance of Clausewitz, as political centers of gravity. Since, as Clausewitz tells us, war is a continuation of politics by other means, there is an implied centrality to communications in Clausewitz's theory as well. Just as communications are central to the strategy of traditional warfare, so are they critical to the strategy of *al-Qaeda*. To understand *al-Qaeda's* strategy, one needs to be familiar with *al-Qaeda's* origin and ideological background, which will be covered in the next chapter.

[81] Clausewitz, *On War*, 595-596.
[82] Clausewitz, *On War*, 617.
[83] Jomini, *Art of War*, 78-79.

CHAPTER 2 - AL-QAEDA'S ORIGINS

2.1 The Origin of *Jihadi* Terrorism

Al-Qaeda's origins can be traced geographically to Saudi Arabia and historically to the eleventh century AD. Ibn Taymiyya (*Taqi al-Din Ahmad ibn Taymiyya;* 1263-1328) was a Muslim scholar whose views in theology and *fiqh*[84] sought the return of Islam to earlier literal interpretations. Ibn Taymiyyah was a member of the school founded by Ahmad ibn Hanbal.[85] During his imprisonment, he laid the foundation for today's most fundamentalist current, the puritanical *Wahhabism* Islamic school of thought.[86] Ibn Taymiyyah taught that "the first obligation (after the profession of faith) is to repel the enemy aggressors who assault both sanctity and security … and the individual or community that participates in it finds itself between two blissful outcomes: victory and triumph or martyrdom and Paradise."[87] Taymiyyah declared that Mongol rulers were not true Muslims. He issued *fatwas*[88] against Mongol leaders who incorporated tribal codes and did not dogmatically build their governance upon *Sharia*[89] law.[90] Establishing the roots of the *takfir* concept−the practice of declaring Muslim Mongol leaders infidels−he argued that these rulers were thus legitimate targets.[91]

Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, an 18th century Islamic teacher, was inspired in his *Hanbalism* by Ibn Taymiyya. The very conservative *Hanbali* legal tradition within the *Sunni* sect is particularly dogmatic in matters of ritual. Adb al-Wahhab criticized the

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[84] *Fiqh* meaning knowledge, understanding, insight of the Islamic law is derived from the Koran and the Sunna.
[85] Trevor Stanley, "Understanding the Origins of Wahhabism and Salafism," *Terrorism Monitor,* Volume 3 Issue 14, 15 July 2005. http://www.jamestown.org/programs/gta/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=528&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=180&no_cache=1.
[86] Riedel, *Search for Al-Qaeda*, 20.
[87] Shaykh ul-Islaam Taqi ud-Deen Ahmad ibn Taymiyyah, *Governance According to Allaah's Law in Reforming* (Birmingham, GB: Maktabah Al Ansaar 2004), 27, http://www.archive.oIslamicBooksByIbnTaymiyyahMaqdisiAndAbdullahAzzamrg/stream//moral_doctrine_of_Jihad_djvu.txt.
[88] *Fatwas*: Religious decrees.
[89] *Sharia*: Meaning the "path" or "way" is the body of Islamic moral code and law.
[90] Open Source Center, *Master Narratives Special Report: Al-Qaeda; Al-Qaeda Master Narratives and Affiliate Case Studies: Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb,* Master Narratives Platform Special Report, (Washington, D.C.: Open Source Center, September 2011), 35.
[91] Open Source Center, *Master Narratives Special Report*, 15.

superstitions that had contaminated Islam's purity and caused, he believed, the degeneration of the Muslim world. He advocated the eradication of pernicious foreign influence and innovations. Al-Wahhab strove to change his society by purifying Islam because, in his view, the society was decadent and had deteriorated in its moral values. Al-Wahhab gave *jihad* a prominence in his teachings as a means and counseled the purging of these foreign influences in an Islamic revival.[92] In the *Wahhabi* tradition, the Prophet said, "*Jihad* is the ultimate manifestation of Islam, as the Messenger said ... It is a furnace in which Muslims are melted out and which allows the separation of the bad [Muslims] from the good one. It is also a pass to the Eden [Paradise] and the Eden is in the shade of swords."[93] Al-Wahhab's main interest was to spread what the "messenger," in his understanding desired to communicate. For him, Islam had to be simple and pure in complete devotion to one God.[94] In al-Wahhab's reading, the original grandeur of Islam could only be regained by strict adherence to the principles enunciated by the Prophet Muhammad: "our way is the way of the Salaf."[95] Not very popular in his home region, Wahhab found refuge near Mecca. Here he formed a formal alliance with Muhammad ibn Saud. Al-Wahhab swore allegiance to ibn Saud, and ibn Suad in turn agreed to make al-Wahhab's ideology that of his domain. Thereby this ideology became the basis for ibn Saud's quest in unifying the Arabian tribes.[96] The Wahhabi philosophy was actively spread by financing the building of mosques as communication outlets for selected messages from the Prophet that advanced Wahhab's ideology.[97] Wahhab taught, "We must find out what true Islam is: it is above all a rejection of all gods except God, a refusal to allow others to share in that worship which is due to God alone (*shirk*). *Shirk* is

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[92] Stanley, "Understanding the Origins of Wahhabism and Salafism."
[93] Dore Gold, *Hatred's Kingdom: How Saudi Arabia Supports the New Global Terrorism*, Google Books, (Washington D.C.: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 2004), 25. http://books.google.de/books?id=Ui27nwe86uYC&pg=PA267&lpg=PA267&dq=dore+gold+hatred's+k&source=bl&ots=ygabQ1nhb6&sig=VMfHsWEEnlqJ5cjke3HYyHMbl2s&hl=de&sa=X&ei=xCMkT4GiA4XctgeFntz5Cg&ved=0CCMQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q&f=false.
[94] Riedel, *Search for Al-Qaeda*, 40.
[95] Al-Wahhab quoted in David Aaron, *In Their Own Words* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2008), 50.
[96] Aaron, *In Their Own Words*, 50.
[97] Seth G. Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires-America's War in Afghanistan* (New York, NY: Norton & Company, 2010), 70.

evil, no matter what the object, whether it be 'king or prophet, saint or tree or tomb.'"[98] To spread his view, communication of these messages served as the means to an end.

As Ambassador Dore Gold, an expert on Middle Eastern affairs, explained, "[Ibn Abdul Wahhab's] zealotry was fed by a desire to re-create the true Islam, based on what he understood to be Islamic practice in the seventh century Arabia at the time of the Prophet Muhammad."[99] Gold goes on to write, "One of the central doctrines of Wahhabism was *takfir*, a charge that Muslims could become infidels, or worse, by engaging in improper religious activities. Even a person who uttered the proclamation of Islamic faith… but still practiced polytheism should be 'denounced as infidel and killed.'"[100] Thereby he expanded the argument that one Muslim can declare another Muslim an infidel, not just Mongol rulers, and thereby created a religious way of justification for the killing of infidels. The justification of *takfir* is founded upon verse 4:115of the Koran, "And whoever acts hostilely to the Apostle after that guidance has become manifest to him, and follows other than the way of the believers, we will turn him to that to which he has turned and make him enter hell; and it is an evil resort."[101] As the George Washington University Professor Marc Lynch explains, "The use of *takfir* … is based on a stark, restrictive definition of Islam in which only the doctrinally pure merit the name Muslim. This doctrine authorizes the most extreme brutality."[102] A century later, one of ibn Saud's descendants succeeded in unifying large portions of the peninsula, which later became Saudi Arabia, with *Wahhabism* as state religion.[103]

Within the same timeframe of the unification of the Arabian Peninsula under ibn Saud, the MB was founded in Ismailiya, Egypt in 1928 by the Islamic scholar Hassan al-Banna. [104] In his view, the decline of Islamic civilization occurred due to the

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[98] Wahhab quoted in Gold, *Hatred's Kingdom*, 19.
[99] Gold, *Hatred's Kingdom*, 20.
[100] Gold, *Hatred's Kingdom*, 23.
[101] As quoted in Aaron, *In Their Own Words*, 79.
[102] Marc Lynch, "Jihadis and the Ikhwan," in *Self-Inflicted Wounds: Debates and Divisions Within Al-Qa'ida and its Periphery*, ed. Assaf Moghadam and Brian Fishman (West Point, NY: Combating Terrorism Center 16 December 2010), 155-182, 167.
[103] Aaron, *In Their Own Words*,50.
[104] Lorenzo Vidino, *The New Muslim Brotherhood in the West* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press 2010), 18.

abandonment of fundamental Islamic beliefs.[105] His MB applied a modern organizational model to communicate the messages of the nineteenth-century reformers as way and mean to reach their end. Strongly opposed to colonial rule, they advocated Egyptian independence. As the Harvard Professor Lorenzo Vidino explains, "While most anti-British movements took inspiration from an array of Western-imported ideologies, from nationalism to socialism, the Brotherhood was basing its discourse on Islam. … Banna saw the answer to the Western military-political-ethical-social invasion of the Muslim world as 'resistance to foreign domination through the exaltation of Islam.' And no imitation was more malign than that of Western legal systems."[106]

Officially the MB follow the "model of political activism combined with Islamic charity work,"[107] and their interest is to propagate the Sunni reading of the Koran as the "sole reference point for ... ordering the life of the Muslim family, individual, community ... and state."[108] In addition to these official pacific aims, however, Hassan al-Banna also created a paramilitary wing to speed up the exaltation of Islam. Their task was to the fight against British rule via a bombing and assassination campaign.[109] As al-Banna advocated, "The Islamic *jihad* is the noblest of endeavors" and "[w]ars are a social necessity."[110]

After a failed attempt to assassinate President Gamal Abdul Nasser in 1954, the MB was banned and thousands of members were imprisoned and tortured. This clash with the authorities prompted an important shift in the ideology of the MB. The repression forced the MB underground and into exile stimulating Sayyid Qutb's formulation of a much more radical Islam that finds its roots in his youth. Qutb was born

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[105] Aaron, *In Their Own Words*, 52.
[106] Vidino, *New Muslim Brotherhood*, 18.
[107] BBC News Middle East, "Profile: Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood," *BBC.co.uk*, 9 February 2011, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-12313405.
[108] Ursula Lindsey, "Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood: widening split between young and old," *The Christian Science Monitor*, December 21, 2009, http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2009/1221/Egypt-s-Muslim-Brotherhood-widening-split-between-young-and-old.
[109] Vidino, *New Muslim Brotherhood*, 22-26.
[110] Al-Banna as quoted in Aaron, *In Their Own Words*, 55.

in the same year as al-Banna and grew up in a renowned hotbed of extremism in Asyut, Egypt.[111]

Qutb's writings, especially his 1964 work *Milestones*, inspired the founders of many radical Islamist groups, including *al-Qaeda*. Qutb's work encouraged the use of *jihad* against ignorant Western and Islamic societies.[112] In Qutb's view, the Islamization from below was too slow in eradicating western influence, due to the intervention of local authorities and foreign influence. He blended Islamic fundamentalism and Ibn Taymiyyah's philosophy with Anti-Western sentiments and *jihad* against apostate regimes.[113] He saw the solution of the slow process in the concepts of *takfir* and *jihad* to instill fear into their opponents. Thereby Qutb expanded the concept of *takfir.* For him, *takfir* applies to Muslim rulers that have refused to implement *Sharia* and in effect have abandoned Islam, not just to repel Mongol Muslim influences. [114] True Muslims are obligated to engage in *coup d'état* and kill such apostate rulers.[115] As the director of research of the National Center for Scientific Research in Paris, Scott Atran, states, "Ibn Taymiyyah's philosophy and Sayyid Qutb's example become the touchstones of modern *jihad*."[116] Sayyid Qutb is the point of divergence between the mainstream MB and its more radical offspring.[117]

As Lorenzo Vidino explains Qutb's goals, "A small group of true Muslims, vaguely resembling the revolutionary Vanguard envisioned by Lenin, should spearhead the fight against apostate rulers."[118] Irregular warfare expert Dr. James Kiras adds that Qutb saw the Vanguard concept as an essential catalyst for systemic change.[119] Qutb's Vanguard concept is profoundly influenced by Leninist theory. Even as he attacked elements of Marxism, Leninism and Communism, Jason Burke, the south Asia

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[111] Bruce Riedel, *The Search for Al-Qaeda-Its Leadership, Ideology, and Future* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution 2008), 17.
[112] Seyyid Qutb, *Milestone*, (USA: SIME journal, 2005), http://majalla.org/books/2005/qutb-nilestone.pdf
[113] Aaron, *In Their Own Words*, 58.
[114] Vidino, *New Muslim Brotherhood*, 24-25.
[115] Vidino, *New Muslim Brotherhood*, 25.
[116] Scott Atran, *Talking to the Enemy-Faith Brotherhood, and the (Un)Making of Terrorists* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 2010), 83.
[117] Marc Lynch, "Jihadis and the Ikhwan," 158.
[118] Vidino, *New Muslim Brotherhood*, 25.
[119] Kiras, "Irregular Warfare," 269.

correspondent of *The Guardian* and *The Observer* newspapers, explains, "Qutb's most important work, *Ma'alim fi'l-tariq* (Milestones), reads in part like an Islamicized Communist Manifesto."[120] Qutb copied major elements from these political schools of thought. Sayyid Qutb also encouraged Muslims to live as the Prophet had done thousand years before. Qutb transported and transferred the deep felt dishonor and lost security in Egypt into his ideology to further his interest. As Marc Lynch describes, "Qutb's more extreme vision … took root within a demoralized, angry and fiercely repressed MB."[121]

In 1965, the Egyptian government again cracked down on the MB and executed Sayyid Qutb in 1966.[122] After his execution, his ideology emerged as the blueprint for Islamic radicals.[123] Catalyzed by the aftermath of the crushing Arab defeat in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, many Arabs, including Osama bin Laden, felt a deep attack on their honor and security amplifying the deep resentments after *Al-Nakba*.[124] As the professor Dr. Fawaz A. Gerges explains, "The turn to Islamist militancy was a direct result of the shattering defeat of the Arab states 1967. Manny Arabs came to realize that the secular dominant authoritarian order could not even protect the homeland. Not only did the post-colonial state … failed to deliver the goods, failed to create effective economic and social institutions, it failed to protect the homeland. It failed to created authentic governments based on *sharia* Islamic state. … *Jihadism* was also a revolt against the religious establishment itself … which was coopted by the secular authoritarian decadent order."[125]

Today, the MB is one of the largest Islamist and political movements in the Arab world, "whose members cooperate with each other throughout the world, based on the

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[120] Jason Burke, "Think Again, Al Qaeda," *Foreign Policy*, 1 May 2004, 3, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2004/05/01/think_again_al_qaeda.
[121] Lynch, "Jihadis and the Ikhwan," 158.
[122] BBC News Middle East, "Profile: Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, *BBC.co.uk*, 9 February 2011," http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-12313405
[123] Barbara Zoller, "Prison Talk: The Muslim Brotherhood's Internal Struggle During Gamal Abdel Nasser's Persecution, 1957 to 1971," *International Journal Of Middle Eastern Studies* 39 (2007): 411-433 and Lynch, "Jihadis and the Ikhwan," 158-159.
[124] *Al-Nakba*-meaning the Catastrophe: The Palestinian Arabs loss of their homes and lands to the new state of Israel in 1948.
Gerges, *Rise and Fall of Al-Qaeda*, 39.
[125] Fawaz A. Gerges, interview by Harry Kreisler, *Conversations with History series of Institute of International Studies of the History University of California at Berkeley*, 30 November 2007, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q_Ds65Rrz8c.

same religious worldview-the spread of Islam, until it rules the world."[126] The MB is a key source of Islamist thought and political activism and advocates peaceful political participation. While the MB consistently denounces *al-Qaeda's* ideology, rejects extremism, *takfir*,[127] and terrorist activities in Muslim States, it supports the violent resistance against Israel.[128] Further, as Marc Lynch states, "… the Brotherhood remains deeply committed to spreading a conservative vision of Islamic society and its cadres are deeply hostile to Israel and to US foreign policy."[129] Their success is founded upon their powerful message. It is a form of anticolonial nationalism based on common faith instead of origin ethnic or heritage.[130]

The MB's ideology, *Salafism,* originated as an intellectual movement in the mid to late 19th Century at the al-Azhar University in Cairo. From there, *Salafism* was imported into Saudi Arabia in its *Qutbist* reading. At that time, *Wahhabism* was the dominant state religion in Saudi Arabia. As the Islamic terrorism expert Trevor Stanley clarifies, "In terms of their respective formation, *Wahhabism* and *Salafism* were quite distinct. *Wahhabism* was a pared-down Islam that rejected modern influences, while *Salafism* sought to reconcile its Islam school of thought with modernism. What they had in common is that both rejected the current understanding of tradition in favor of a deeper/older traditional teachings on Islam in favor of direct, fundamentalist reinterpretation."[131] *Wahhabism* has its root in rejecting modernity and *Salafism* is a call back to the basics. The Arabic root of the word *Salafa* is to return used as a call to return to the time of the ancestors the pious forefathers.[132] These righteous Caliphs are the most venerated religious leaders. The term *Salafism*[133] differentiates the creed of the first three

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[126] Mohammed Akef, *Murshid* (spiritual leader) of the Egyptian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood until January 2010, quoted in Vidino, *New Muslim Brotherhood,* 39.
[127] *Takfir* is the practice of pronouncing a Muslim a non-Muslim and jihad is in this instance understood as violent confrontation. Vidino, *New Muslim Brotherhood*, 24-25.
[128] Lynch, "Jihadis and the Ikhwan," 155.
[129] Lynch, "Jihadis and the Ikhwan," 155.
[130] Vidino, *New Muslim Brotherhood in the West*, 20.
[131] Trevor Stanley, "Understanding the Origins of Wahhabism and Salafism."
[132] Vidino, *New Muslim Brotherhood*, 17.
[133] The term *Salaf* literally means those from history who precede, have gone before. Muttaqun Online, "Call of those who preceded us," http://muttaqun.com/salafiyyah.html, (accessed 24 January 2012).

generations from subsequent variations of *Sunni* Islamic creed and methodology movements.[134]

Trevor Stanley explains that "*Salafism* and *Wahhabism* began as two distinct movements, Faisal's [Faisal bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud; King of Saudi Arabia 1964 – 1975][135] embrace of *Salafi* pan-Islamism resulted in cross-pollination between Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's teachings on *tawhid*, *shirk* and *bid'a* and *Salafi* interpretations of *al hadith* (the sayings of Muhammad). Some *Salafis* nominated Ibn Abd al-Wahhab as one of the *Salaf* retrospectively, bringing *Wahhabism* into the fold of *Salafism*."[136] *Salafism* is a literal, strict, and puritanical approach of *Sunni* Islamic theology.

While the exiled MB members in Saudi Arabia carried with them the new *Qutbist* ideas, even so the MB itself reasserted a more moderate orthodoxy.[137] Though the MB is more moderate, they "both want to Islamicize the public domain and create Islamic states ruled by *Sharia*. Both are *Salafi* in their approach to jurisprudence, both consider *jihad* central to Islam."[138] The mainstream MB officially rejected the core of Qutb's ideology with the 1969 publication of *Preachers Not Judges,* but Sayyid Qutb remained influential with the MB.[139] As Marc Lynch writes, "For *Salafi jihadists*, the rejection of Qutb is where the MB went decisively astray."[140] Thereby it was the decisive point in creating the more radical offshoots. According to the RAND political scientist Seth G. Jones, due to its stunning and drastic break with the status quo Qutb's work was eagerly read by younger generations of Muslims in the 1970s.[141] The young Osama bin Laden was one of them.

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[134] Abu 'Iyad as-Salafi, "The Principles of Salafiyyah - A Brief Introduction to the Salafi Daah," salafipublications.com, http://www.salafipublications.com/sps/sp.cfm?subsecID=SLF02&articleID=SLF020001&articlePages=1 (accessed 24 January 2012).
[135] Faisal bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud was the king of Saudi Arabia between 1964 and 1975. He advocated the unity of Muslims under one Islamic state (Pan-Islamism).
[136] Stanley, "Understanding the Origins of Wahhabism and Salafism."
[137] Lynch, "Jihadis and the Ikhwan," 158.
[138] Lynch, "Jihadis and the Ikhwan," 160.
[139] Barbara Zoller, "Prison Talk: The Muslim Brotherhood's Internal Struggle During Gamal Abdel Nasser's Persecution, 1957 to 1971," *International Journal Of Middle Eastern Studies* 39 (2007): 411-433 and Lynch, "Jihadis and the Ikhwan," 158-159.
[140] Lynch, "Jihadis and the Ikhwan," 159.
[141] Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires*, 77-79.

During his study of economics at the King Abdul Azizy University in Saudi Arabia in the late 1970s, bin Laden was exposed to the Palestinian-Jordanian Islamic scholar Abdullah Azzam and Muhammad Qutb, the brother of Sayyid Qutb. Muhammad Qutb inspired bin Laden to read his brother's manifestos.[142] Azzam, formerly a member of the MB and longtime follower of Sayyid Qutb, was instrumental in shaping bin Laden's ideology. He was "convinced that Palestine could only be liberated through a unifying Islamic revolution … [and] he was frustrated by the Arab states' unwillingness to fight Israel."[143] Abdullah Azzam "elevated the duty of *jihad* to a central pillar of Islam that informs *Salafi Jihadism*."[144] By propagating his view of the Israel-Palestinian conflict, Azzam introduced Osama bin Laden to the Palestinian narrative and he played a pivotal role later on in the Afghan war.[145]

Next to failing in providing security, the western-supported secular Muslim governments were not able to provide the fundamental goods of everyday life and thereby served as catalyst of the Islamist movement. The culmination of the repression of Islamic organizations and governmental corruption and failures of postcolonial secular Arab governments furthered extremist developments.[146] Within the same timeframe, Ayman al-Zawahiri's Egyptian Islamic *Jihad* Organization developed out of a *Qutbist* fragment of the Egyptian MB in the late 1970s.[147]

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 enabled Saudi elements to begin an active campaign in the region. One of the key facilitators and agitator was the former MB member Abdullah Azzam, also known as the "Lenin of international *jihad*." His skill in political and religious agitation enabled him to attract Muslims to come to Afghanistan to fight the Soviet invaders. Over time, the Afghan *jihad* brought numerous Islamic radicals together. One key military instructor and lecturer who joined the fight,

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[142] Gerges, *Rise and Fall of Al-Qaeda,* 40-41.
[143] Riedel, *Search for Al-Qaeda*, 41.
[144] Lynch, "Jihadis and the Ikhwan," 166.
[145] Riedel, *Search for Al-Qaeda*, 41.
[146] Aaron, *In Their Own Words*, 3.
[147] Lynch, "Jihadis and the Ikhwan," 158.

was Abu Mus'ab al-Suri. He served in the Arab-Afghan training camps from 1987-1992.[148]

The evidence that bin Laden founded *al-Qaeda* in 1987 or 1988 is inconclusive. It seems likely that "associates appeared to have set up *al-Qaeda al-Askariza*, or 'a training base,' as bin Laden subsequently recalled."[149] As Jason Burke suggests "[this idea of the training base] that is where the name [of the group] came from."[150] In the realization that he shared similarities with Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn Abdul Wahhab, and Sayyid Qutb, bin Laden began to see himself in their tradition and to see in the path they advocated his own interests. According to Seth G. Jones, the newly-formed group "agreed that their goal would be 'to lift the word of God, to make His religion victorious' across the Arab world through armed *jihad*."[151] As Fawaz A. Gerges argues, *Al-Qaeda* was not an organization as of yet. Bin Laden's stay in Sudan served as incubators that breed *Salafi-Jihadi* fighters that was "subsequently consummated in Afghanistan."[152]

Sometime in late 1987 to early 1988, Abdullah Azzam formulated one of the central founding documents of *al-Qaeda* and published it in April 1988 in the journal of the Arab *mujahedeen Al Jihad*.[153] "Every principle needs a Vanguard to carry it forward … There is no ideology, neither earthly nor heavenly, that does not require such a Vanguard that gives everything it possesses in order to achieve victory for this ideology. This Vanguard constitutes *Al-Qa'idah al-Sulbah* for the expected society."[154] As Jason Burke explains, Azzam envisaged independently acting men "who would set an example

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[148] Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad*, 1-10.
[149] Gerges, *Rise and Fall of Al-Qaeda*, 50.
[150] Jason Burke, *Al Qaeda: The True Story of Radical Islam* (London, GB: I.B. Tauris, 2003), 2.
[151] Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires*, 73.
[152] Gerges, *Rise and Fall of Al-Qaeda*, 53.
[153] Rohan Gunaratna, *Ideology in Terrorism and Counter Terrorism: Lessons from Combating Al Qaeda and Al Jemaah Al Islamiyah in Southeast Asia* (London, GB: Crisis States Research Centre, September 2005), Discussion Paper no. 05/42, 4-6, 6, http://kms1.isn.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/ISN/44015/ichaptersection_singledocument/0d07f910-03a4-4cc7-86ea-5b754a6e04fa/en/07.pdf.
[154] Abdullah Azzam as translated and quoted in Reuven Paz, "Islamists and Anti-Americanism," *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, volume 7, no. 4 (December 2003). Abdullah Azzam, "Al-Qa'ida al-Sulbah (The Solid Base)," *al-Jihad*, no. 41 (April 1988): 46-49.

for the rest of the Islamic world and thus galvanize the *Ummah* (global community of believers) against its oppressors."[155]

At the end of the Afghan war in 1989, none of the leading figures—bin Laden, Azzam, or Zawahiri—advocated an armed confrontation with the West, with whom they were "in the same trenches as the *mujahedeen* battling the evil empire."[156] Within this timeframe, bin Laden's relationship with Azzam deteriorated. Bin Laden wished to support terrorist action against Egypt and other Muslim secular regimes. Having lived in Egypt, Azzam knew the price of such actions and opposed it vehemently. Azzam was assassinated in Peshawar, Pakistan in November 1989. The ideological *jihadist* hardliner Dr. Ayman Al-Zawahiri filled the resulting ideological vacuum. Al-Zawahiri became bin Laden's doctor, ideological mentor, principal strategist, and deputy.[157]

From their origins within the MB until the mid-1990s, the *al-Qaeda jihadists* were still mainly inward looking. In their interest's they were "obsessed with replacing 'renegade' secular Muslim rulers with Koran-based states or states governed by the *Sharia*."[158] Within this timeframe, the focus was not external Western states, the far enemy, but the near enemy−pro-Western Muslim leaders.[159] Besides the militant Islamist movement known as *jihadism*,[160] the other MB leaders publicly eschewed fear instilling violence against the regime and opted for nonviolent opposition, political participation focusing on societal reform.[161] Even more, MB affiliated ideologists have developed a theoretical Islamic defense of democracy.[162]

A profound ideological shift in *al-Qaeda* occurred in the early 1990s. The US military intervention during the first Gulf War, the permanent stationing of US troops in Saudi Arabia (bin Laden's home and the historical center of Islam), and the refusal by the Saudi government to accept bin Laden's offer to mobilize a *mujahedeen* force in lieu of

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[155] Burke, "Think Again, Al Qaeda.,"
[156] Gerges, *Rise and Fall of Al-Qaeda*, 46.
[157] Gunaratna, *Ideology in Terrorism and Counter Terrorism*, 4-6.
[158] Gerges, *Rise and Fall of Al-Qaeda*, 30.
[159] Gerges, *Rise and Fall of Al-Qaeda*, 31.
[160] Gerges, *Rise and Fall of Al-Qaeda*, 30.
[161] Vidino, *New Muslim Brotherhood*, 25.
[162] Lynch, "Jihadis and the Ikhwan," 168.

reliance on US forces agitated bin Laden. As Seth G. Jones states, "The deployment of US soldiers to Saudi Arabia was a shock to bin Laden and a clarion call for his movement. … To have non-Arabs on Saudi soil was an affront, but for the Americans to lead the military assault was a grievous transgression" and a further blow to Arab and Muslim honor.[163]

After setbacks in Arab countries in the mid-1990s, *jihadis* increasingly focused on Western nation states. The Islamists grew increasingly frustrated by their failure to change the status quo in their home countries.[164] This can be illustrated by the current *al-Qaeda* leader Ayman al-Zawahiri, who stated in 2001 that the United States only knew "the language of interests backed by brute military force. Therefore, if we wish to have a dialog with them … we must talk to them in the language they understand."[165] The language of fear was stimulated by terror. They believe that striking at the Western sponsors of apostate regimes (i.e., at the so-called "far enemy," as opposed to their perceived illegitimate local governments or "near enemy") might be the strategically more successful approach.[166] Al-Zawahiri sought to resolve the doctrinal dispute over the prioritization of the far and near enemy by blending the far enemy and the near enemy into one, arguing that secular apostate Muslim leaders were puppets of their Western masters.[167]

While *al-Qaeda* strives to draw a direct unbroken line between Qutb and their own ideology, however, Qutb never advocated attacking the "far enemy." As Sayyid Eid, a longtime prison cell mate of Qutb states, "I do not ever recall *al-shahid* [meaning the one witness who is honest and trustworthy referring to Qutb] saying that we should wage war against America or Britain; rather he wanted us to be vigilant against the West's cultural penetration of our societies."[168] Al-Zawahiri and bin Laden substituted

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[163] Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires*, 74.
[164] Burke, "Think Again: Al Qaeda," 3.
[165] Excerpts from Ayman al-Zawahiri, *Knights Under the Prophet's Banner* printed in Al-Sharq Al-Awsat Publishes Extracts from Al-Jihad Leader Al-Zawahiri's New Book, trans and publ. the Foreign Broadcast information Service, Version 2, Open Source Center, OSC document GMP20020108000197 (2 December 2001).
[166] Burke, "Think Again: Al Qaeda," 3.
[167] Aaron, *In Their Own Words*, 70.
[168] As quoted in Gerges, *Rise and Fall of Al-Qaeda*, 32.

"the enemy without for the enemy within, and subsequently collapse[d] all distinctions between the two, a testament to Qutb's absolutist and opaque ideological categories."[169] With this substitution *al-Qaeda* coupled Qutb's anti-US narrative and his ideology to facilitate their efforts to reclaim Qutb as the spiritual force behind the new transnational *jihad*. Al-Zawahiri and bin Laden adopted useful elements and modified them to fit their transnational agenda.[170] Zawahiri's ideology focused on what he believed the West had done to the Islamic world.[171] In other words, *al-Qaeda* "borrowed the concept of *al-Islam al-haraki* (a pioneering Vanguard)—which Qutb coined and popularized—and deployed it against the religious and political establishment at home and against foreign powers."[172] Especially for Zawahiri, the demise of the Ottoman Caliphate in 1919 weakened Islam's position in the world.[173] As the Senior Fellow in foreign policy at the Saban Center for Middle East Policy of the Brookings Institution Bruce Riedel explains, "Worst of all, the demise … made possible the British Mandate that would make Palestine a national homeland for the Jewish people."[174] As Al-Zawahiri states, "Zionist entity is a foothold for the Crusader invasion of the Islamic world. The Zionist entity is the Vanguard of the US campaign to dominate the Islamic Levant."[175] *Al-Qaeda* adapted Qutb to their needs. *Al-Qaeda*'s anti-Western and anti-Colonial thinking necessitated its interest in targeting a transnational enemy, requiring the adaptation of Qutb to fit their propaganda.

For *al-Qaeda*'s transnational *jihadism*, the Afghan *jihad* was pivotal in numerous ways. It served as a catalyst in accelerating and hardening the two powerful ideological currents into *al-Qaeda*'s ideological *Salafi* heritage. The radical Egyptian *Salafi* Islamism (Egyptian Zawahiri) and the Saudi ultra-conservative *Wahhabism* (bin Laden) melded the ideologies to a new militant *Salafi-Jihadi-Takfir* practicing ideology.[176]

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[169] Gerges, *Rise and Fall of Al-Qaeda*, 32-33.
[170] Gerges, *Rise and Fall of Al-Qaeda*, 32-34.
[171] Riedel, *Search for Al-Qaeda*, 25.
[172] Gerges, *Rise and Fall of Al-Qaeda*, 34.
[173] Riedel, *Search for Al-Qaeda*, 25.
[174] Riedel, *Search for Al-Qaeda*, 26.
[175] Al-Zawahiri quoted in Riedel, *Search for Al-Qaeda*, 28.
[176] Gerges, *Rise and Fall of Al-Qaeda*, 34; Abu 'Iyad as-Salafi, "The Principles of Salafiyyah - A Brief Introduction to the Salafi Daah," *salafipublications.com,*

Within the *Salafi* ideology, *al-Qaeda* represents with its extreme *Salafi-Jihadi-Takfir* interpretations merely a fringe deviant sect, whose grievances nonetheless resonate with many Muslims.[177]

By the early 1990s, many Arabs had left Afghanistan and infiltrated other countries in an attempt to convert domestic conflict into *jihad,* and by the mid-nineties, the Taliban seized power in Afghanistan and entrusted to Osama bin Laden the control of Arab militant groups operating in Afghanistan. In 1998 bin Laden announced the foundation of the World Islamic Front for *jihad* against the Crusaders,[178] the formal launch of *al-Qaeda* as umbrella organization encompassing a broad pool of *jihadist* factions.[179]

According to Fawaz A. Gerges, Afghanistan was the Mecca of *al-Qaeda* from the late 1990s until 11 September 2001. The Afghan war also gave al-Suri the experience and room to develop his operative frameworks of decentralized *jihadi* guerilla strategy and tactics.[180] He crafted strategic doctrines on decentralized *jihad* based upon guerrilla warfare, international security, and power politics literature in the 2000-2001 timeframe, including *The War of the Flea: Guerrilla Warfare Theory and Practice* by Robert Taber[181] and a synthesis of ideas contained in *On Protracted War* by Mao Tse-Tung[182] and Che Cuevara's *Guerilla Warfare*.[183] As a strategist, he was not so much focused and firm in the finer points of religious exegesis.[184] His writings serve for many *jihadi* activists as a reference point for condemning the MB and furthering their interests. As one of the main strategists within *al-Qaeda*, Abu Mus'ab al-Suri's doctrines have had

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http://www.salafipublications.com/sps/sp.cfm?subsecID=SLF02&articleID=SLF020001&articlePages=1 (accessed 24 January 2012).

[177] Aaron, *In Their Own Words,* 4.

[178] Reflecting upon the Christian Crusades of the 11th-13th century.

[179] Gerges, *Rise and Fall of Al-Qaeda,* 55-57.

[180] Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad,* 1-9.

[181] Robert Taber, *The War Of The Flea-Guerrilla Warfare Theory and Practice* (London, GB: Granada Publishing, 1970).

[182] Mao Tse-Tung, *On Protracted Warfare*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith (New York: NY Praeger Publishers, 1961).

[183] Che Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1998).

[184] Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad,* 9.

great influence on the *al-Qaeda* movement.[185] The *jihadis* were bound by a similar worldview and a similar tribal loyalty on which *al-Qaeda* depended for the survival of its elite Vanguard.[186]

Using Afghanistan as physical base, they trained their adherents and committed terroristic attacks, which instigated US reprisal attacks. Impressed by the US's technological superiority, al-Suri increasingly questioned *al-Qaeda*'s reliance on fixed training camps in areas of US hegemony and threatened by US air and space dominance. After losing their physical base in Afghanistan in 2001, *al-Qaeda* altered its strategy to a more decentralized *jihadi* warfare, which conceptually had already been developed by Abu Mus'ab al-Suri in the early 1990s but was largely ignored by more influential *al-Qaeda* leaders until 2001.[187]

Al-Qaeda's movement since 2001 has been operating from the position of the strategic defensive to ensure its survival and reorganize itself to take an offensive position in the far future. As the terrorism expert David Kilcullen summarizes, *al-Qaeda* is "a Vanguard of hypermodern [in its use of the internet], … making use of all the tools of globalization and applying a strategy to transnational guerrilla warfare, while seeking to organize, aggregate, and exploit the local, particular, long standing grievances of diverse−but usually tribal or traditional−Muslim social groups."[188] This becomes also evident in tracts obtained as part of the *al-Qaeda* documents and communiqués seized during the 2 May 2011 raid on Abbottabad, Pakistan. According to the *CTC Report Letters From Abbottabad*, "It was only when *al-Qaeda* lost its sanctuary following the US-led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 that a trend of regional *jihadi* groups pledging allegiance to *al-Qaeda* or acting in its name emerged. Paradoxically, this may have been due to the fame that the 9/11 attacks generated in the *jihadi* world and at the same time

[185] Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad*, 22.
[186] Gerges, *Rise and Fall of Al-Qaeda*, 57-59.
[187] Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad*, 4.
[188] David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla-Fighting Small Wars In the Midst of A Big One* (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2009), xiv.

al-Qaeda's inability to be in control of its organization after it lost its sanctuary … [leading] to the perception that *al-Qaeda* was expanding."[189]

These documents also disclose bin Laden's global communication and "obsession with ideological purity as he sought to manage the group's demoralized and scattered networks in his final years. They show him seeking to reassert control over factions of loosely affiliated *jihadists* from Yemen to Somalia, as well as independent actors whom he believed had sullied *al-Qaeda's* reputation and muddied its central message."[190] According to Bruce Riedel "He was not a recluse; he was the CEO of a global terrorist organization. … He was receiving communications from *al-Qaeda's* operatives literally around the world, and he was instructing them to carry out acts of terror."[191]

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[189] Lahoud, *Letters from Abbottabad*, 10-11.
[190] Joby Warrick, "Bin Laden's last stand: In final months, terrorist leader worried about his legacy," *The Washington Post*, 30 April 2012, 1, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/bin-ladens-last-stand-in-final-months-terrorist-leader-worried-about-his-legacy/2012/04/30/gIQAStCjsT_story.html.
[191] Bruce Riedel quoted in Warrick, "Bin Laden's last stand," 2; Lahoud, *Letters from Abbottabad*.

2.2 Chapter Conclusion

As this chapter has shown, Clausewitz's theory of war can serve as a methodological foundation for an analysis of *al-Qaeda*'s strategy. This analysis will proceed by investigating the interlocking elements of the grand strategic, strategic and tactical level design of ends, ways, and means for *al-Qaeda*. The chapter also argues that Thucydides' and Hobbes' three key motivators—fear, honor, and interest—are also those motivating *al-Qaeda*'s ends, ways and means. Since *al-Qaeda*'s strategy is *Salafi-Jihadi-Takfir* Terrorism and terrorism is mainly a communication strategy, *al-Qaeda*'s strategic concept can be depicted as a coin with two sides: the strategy side and the strategic communication side (see Figure 2 below). With *al-Qaeda*'s origin in ideology depicted as baseline, their defensive strategy based on decentralized organization and the communication strategy that developed following the loss of their physical base in Afghanistan will be depicted in the next two chapters.

Figure 2. Al-QAEDA'S STRATEGY COIN
Source: Authors' Original Work

CHAPTER 3 – STRATEGY

Angels of mercy, escort our souls to Heaven after we fulfill this duty of crushing the descendants of monkeys and pigs. Dear father and mother, blessings of honor and respect to you, while you escort me to the Maidens of Paradise as a martyr.

- Al-Takrouri 2003

3.1 *Al-Qaeda*'s Grand Strategy

To comprehend the rage behind and ruthlessness of *al-Qaeda* strategic interests requires an understanding of the perceived humiliation felt by a number of "Muslims over the collapse of the Islamic civilization over the past 400 years"[1] and an understanding of the main sources of *al-Qaeda*'s ideological goal of restoring the *Ummah*'s honor, as previously described. Their current ideology is fundamentally still based on Abu Mus'ab al-Suri's writings:

- the organizational program of Sayyid Qutb, especially his principles of *alhakimiyyah* [God's sovereignty on earth];
- the legal-political doctrine of Ibn Taymiyyah and the Salafiyyah school, especially the basis of loyalty and innocence (Al Wala' Wal Bara');
- the jurisprudential and doctrinal heritage of the Wahhabite call; and
- "some basic elements" from the MB's ideology.[2]

Based mainly on this ideological foundation, *al-Qaeda*'s policy aims at politically uniting all countries with a Muslim majority into an Islamic realm through a monolithic Islamic religious/social movement. The way to realize the grand strategy is to reinvigorate the Islamic *Ummah* (Community). *Al-Qaeda* seeks to mobilize the Muslim *Ummah* in a revolutionary transformation of the Muslim world population in confrontation with the international order embodied by Western society.[3] *Al-Qaeda* seeks to put an end to the international order led by the West and terminate the influence

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[1] Aaron, *In Their Own Words*, 2.
[2] Abu Mus'ab al-Suri quoted in Brynjar Lia: "Jihadi Strategists and Doctrinarians," in Assaf Moghadam, Brian Fishman eds., *Self Inflicted Wounds-Debates and Divisions within al-Qa'ida's and its Periphery*, CTC Harmony Project, Dec 16, 2010, 100-131,108. http://www.ctc.usma.edu/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Self-Inflicted-Wounds.pdf.
[3] Bockstette, "Terrorist Exploit Information Technologies," 11-13.

of the West over Muslim territory.[4] According to the CTC, *al-Qaeda* "envisaged their organization as an international entity, serving as a 'wellspring for expertise in military training and [the art of] fighting' … [to] serve to enable other *jihadi* groups around the world, stating that 'our relationship with sincere *jihadi* groups and movements is premised on cooperation [to advance] righteousness and piety.'"[5]

Abu Mus'ab al-Suri articulated how *al-Qaeda* can work towards its goal in the near term: "Our new method for *jihadi* operations … is a global method and call. … Likewise, the present military theory is also dependent upon moving on a global horizon. This is a basic factor in the military movement, besides being a strategy, political, and religious doctrine."[6]

Al-Qaeda's grand strategy aims at creation of Islamic Emirates as a way to create a devout Islamic Caliphate in the long run. As Sheik Alaa Yousuf (Al-Ayerri) declares, "Thus, Muslims can have only one goal: converting the entire humanity to Islam and 'effacing the final traces of all other religions, creeds and ideologies."[7] The implementation of strict *Sharia* law to guarantee the primacy of religion in social and state affairs is pivotal for *al-Qaeda*.[8] Establishing Islamic Emirates where *Sharia* law is the societal and governmental foundation, and uniting all Emirates to an Islamic Caliphate with an Islamic government of Allah, is the mainstay of *al-Qaeda*'s grand strategy. Abolishing the Westphalian state system on the way, this Caliphate will in turn expand to global rule.

In essence, the ways of *al-Qaeda*'s strategy are *Salafi-Jihadi-Takfir* Ideology, the *Sharia*-based society, *Sharia*-based governance the seizure of territory, the uniting the *Ummah*, and establishing an initial core Emirate from which to expand to the desired Caliphate. Al-Zawahiri, who has had a significant influence on *al-Qaeda*'s grand strategy, stated in 2001, "[Sayyid Qutb] affirmed that the issue of unification in Islam is important … it is also a battle over to whom authority and power should belong-to God's

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[4] Gendron, "Al-Qaeda: Propaganda and Media Strategy."
[5] Lahoud, *Letters from Abbottabad*, 9.
[6] Abu Mus'ab al-Suri quoted in Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad*, 368.
[7] Al-Ayerri as quoted in Aaron, *In Their Own Words*, 114.
[8] Gendron, "Al-Qaeda: Propaganda and Media Strategy," 8.

course and *shari'ah*, [or] to man-made laws…"[9] Al-Zawahiri amplified this position, explaining, "[What] we seek is based on three foundations. The first foundation is the rule of *shari'ah*. … The second foundation: … the freedom of the Muslim lands and their liberation from … the yoke of the US and Jewish occupation. … The third foundation: [T]he liberation of the human being."[10]

The infamous (and now deceased) former leader of *al-Qaeda in Iraq,* Abu Musab-al Zarqawi, drew upon Taymiyyah and Qutb in a 2006 interview and explained the ends of *al-Qaeda*'s grand strategy in the following way, even though he was not a member of the *al-Qaeda* central leadership:

> As for our political agenda as some people call it, so we find it summarized richly in the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him), "I have been sent with the sword, between the hands of the hour, until Allah is worshipped alone". … [W]e do not believe in politics in the way familiar with some groups that are directed by their sect, who raise Islam as a slogan. You find them in the parliaments, participating with the disobeyers in engaging the seats that rule against the law of Allah. ... We fight in the way of Allah, until the law of Allah is implemented, and the first step is to expel the enemy, then establish the Islamic state, then we set forth to conquer the lands of Muslims to return them back to us, then after that, we fight the *kuffar* [disbelievers] until they accept one of the three. "I have been sent with the sword, between the hands of the hour"; this is our political agenda. … For after the establishment of an Islamic nation, he started moving to spread Islam in the east and the west and the north and the south. Our political agenda now is to expel the imposing enemy, this is the beginning, and our agenda after it is to establish the *Sharia* of Allah on earth. … Interviewer: Did Abu Zayed exaggerate when he said "*Al-Qaeda* aims in 100 years to take control over the world"? Zarqawi: This is not hidden. We are working to spread the equality of Islam throughout the globe, to wipe away the darkness of disbelief and the misconceptions of the other religions. … In this condition, *jihad* becomes obligatory. Sheikh Ibn at Taymiyyah said, "No excuse can be used as an excuse for it". … Look at what the enemy is doing to the Muslims? How they are killing their sons and leaving their women alive and robbing them off their honor and taking their money?[11]

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[9] Al-Zawahiri as quoted in Aaron, *In Their Own Words*, 71-72.
[10] Al Zawahiri as quoted in Aaron, *In Their Own Words*, 71-72.
[11] Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi interview by Abu Al-Baghdadi, "Dialogue With Sheikh Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi," *Al-Furqan Foundation for Media Production*, 20 December 2006, http://www.kavkazcenter.com/eng/content/2006/12/20/6921.shtml.

Al-Qaeda senior leaders consider the current rulers of Islamic states to be unbelieving apostate and agents of the West. As the *al-Qaeda* member Saeed Ahmad al-Zahrani explained, "The rulers of the countries of Islam in this age are all apostate, unbelieving tyrants who have departed in every way from Islam. Muslims who proclaim God's unity have no other choice than iron and fire, *jihad* in the way of God, to restore the caliphate according to the Prophet's teachings."[12]

Along the way to achieving its goal, *al-Qaeda* seeks to destroy the USA, the Western state and societal system, Israel—the far enemy—as well as the *Shi'a* ideology. In addition, the group also seeks to eliminate unbelievers and avenge the perceived oppression off all Muslims in order to restore the *Ummah*'s honor. However, there is a lack of articulated political and social ends that go beyond the establishment of the Caliphate and the implementation of *Sharia* law. Details on the desired Caliphate remain obscure but the seizure of territory to establish a base and to establish an Islamic Emirate is an obvious end. The seizure of territory serves as a way to the end of establishing an Emirate. In the words of al-Zawahiri, "[The] *jihadist* movement needs an arena that would act like an incubator where its seeds would grow and where it can acquire practical experience in combat, politics and organizational matters."[13]

Al-Qaeda has a very long time horizon for establishing the desired Islamic Caliphate. Abu-Hafs al-Masri Brigades illustrated in 2004 the time horizon for reaching the grand strategic end: "The enemy can be patient but cannot persevere. We, with our faith, creed, and love for meeting Allah, can persevere until the enemy collapses, even if this takes decades or centuries."[14] *Al-Qaeda* sees itself as the "inciter-in-chief" provoking a sustained global uprising of the *Ummah* for decades to come in order to further its *Salafi-Jihadi-Takfir* Terrorism Islamic Vanguard grand strategy.[15]

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[12] Aaron, *In Their Own Words*, 173.
[13] Aaron, *In Their Own Words*, 198.
[14] As quoted in Aaron, *In Their Own Words*, 202.
[15] Kilcullen, *Accidental Guerrilla*, 28.

3.2 *Al-Qaeda*'s Strategy

Strategy is confined only by the event horizon of possibilities, a horizon which expands anew with every action
-Everett Dolman

Al-Qaeda's adherents believe they can achieve their grand strategic and strategic ends only through by the way of utilizing *jihadi* terrorism as overarching strategy. By creating and exploiting the fear and anxiety of a population, *al-Qaeda* aims to use its terrorist strategy as a catalyst for instability.[16] As one of *al-Qaeda*'s leaders the Saudi Abu Ayman al-Hilali explained in 2002, "*Jihad* and martyrdom operations are our strategic weapon against the enemy."[17] Its strategic way is to bleed the United States into bankruptcy, forcing it to withdraw from Muslim lands and the collapse of its local allies (apostate regimes). *Al-Qaeda* aims at exhausting their opponents by numerous, cheap, small-scale attacks to create a strategic effect by exhausting and provoking expensive overreactions on a global scale and exploiting safe havens.[18] Simultaneously, *al-Qaeda*'s strategy aims at provoking and alienating effects of US intervention to rally the *Ummah* behind *al-Qaeda* and destroy the credibility of local (apostate) Muslim regimes.[19]

Using *Salafi-Jihadi-Takfir* Terrorism practicing an Islamic Vanguard concept, *al-Qaeda* aims to further its strategic objective of the removal of all secular political leaders who currently govern Muslim States and the destruction of the State of Israel. The terrorists' aim is to install supportive Islamic regimes and transform the current fractious political landscape of the Muslim world into a unified community to further their grand strategic ends.[20] Abu Mus'ab al-Suri, advising *al-Qaeda* to use methods similar to those outlined by Mao Tse-Tung's in his seminal guerrilla manifesto "On Protracted War," wrote,[21]

> The *jihad* of individual or cell terrorism, using the methods of urban or rual guerilla warfare, is fundamental for exhausting the enemy and causing

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[16] Audrey Kurth Cronin, *How Terrorism Ends: Understanding The Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2009), 166.
[17] Aaron, *In Their Own Words*, 200.
[18] Kilcullen, *Accidental Guerrilla*, 296.
[19] Kilcullen, *Accidental Guerrilla*, 29.
[20] Gendron, "Al-Qaeda: Propaganda and Media Strategy," 8.
[21] For an excerpt of Abu Mus'ab al-Suri's strategy of a protracted guerilla, see Appendix A.

> him to collaps and withdraw. God willing. The Open Front *Jihad* is fundamental for seizing control over land in order to liberate it, and establish Islamic law, with the help of God. The Individual Terrorism *Jihad* and guerilla warfare conducted by small cells, paves the way for the other kind (Open Front *Jihad*), aids and supports it. Without confrontation in the field and seizure of land, however, a state will not emerge for us. And this is the strategic goal for the Resistance project. This is a summary of the military theory which I already developed into its final forms and recorded into a lecture series in the summer of 2000.[22]

In the face of their lack of success in removing secular Muslim regimes and establishing an Islamic Emirate, *al-Qaeda*'s prioritization of strategic ends shofted to the "far enemy" as a way to weaken the "near enemy" as well. Well aware that no apostate leader has been removed thus far due to *al-Qaeda* deeds and that the sizeable, well-trained, and capable US military and security forces cannot be defeated head-on, *al-Qaeda* applies the strategy of *Salafi-Jihadi-Takfir* Terrorism as a way of wearing down the "far enemy" by luring it into a protracted conflict in Muslim lands. As Sabri Mohammed Ebrahim Al Qurashi, currently held in the United States' Guantanamo Bay detention camp, stated in 2002, "*Al-Qaeda* follows a clear strategy. The choice to target the United States from the beginning was a smart strategic choice for the global *jihad* movement. The struggle with the United States' hangers-on in the Islamic region has shown that these hangers-on cannot keep their tyrannical regimes going for a single minute without US help."[23]

One central strategic end is the elimination of the "far enemy" United States by the way of luring it into conflict. The Center for Islamic Studies and Research, an *al-Qaeda* supportive organization, explained the strategy thus, "We must also understand that the *al-Qaeda* organization has adopted a strategy in its war with the Americans based on expanding the battlefield and exhausting the enemy, who spreads his interests over the globe, with successive and varied blows."[24] The strategic object is causing a disproportionate US military response to rally the *Ummah* behind *al-Qaeda*. Scott Atran puts it thus: "That's … why almost no Afghans were closely associated with *al-Qaeda*

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[22] Abu Mus'ab al-Suri quoted in Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad*, 371.
[23] Al-Qurashi quoted in Aaron, *In Their Own Words*, 196.
[24] Center for Islamic Studies and Research 2003 as quoted in Aaron, *In Their Own Words*, 200.

until after 9/11, when America bombed them into togetherness."[25] If possible, attacks are also to be carried out in the United States; as al-Zawahiri states, "Therefore, we must move the battle to the enemy's grounds to burn the hands of those who ignite fire in our countries."[26]

The strategy also aims at financially draining the US as Osama bin Laden asserted in his October 2004 address to America: "*Al-Qaeda* spent $500,000 on the September 11 attacks, while America lost more than $500 billion at the lowest estimate, in the event and its aftermath … Still more serious for America was the fact that the *mujahedeen* forced Bush to resort to an emergency budget in order to continue fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq. This shows the success of our plan to bleed America to the point of bankruptcy, with God's will."[27] Sheikh Abu Bakr Naji, one of *al-Qaeda*'s leading warfare theorists, argues in a similar fashion for a strategic plan that requires "a military strategy working to disperse the efforts and forces of the enemy and to exhaust and drain its monetary and military capabilities."[28] In addition, by conducting major attacks behind the lines for the "far enemy," *al-Qaeda* put on a show of force. This not only serves terrorist strategy but also drives in the majority of the financial donations.[29]

As a key *al-Qaeda* strategic mastermind, Abu Mus'ab al-Suri's pedagogical footprint is very evident. He argued for thorough, rational, long-term strategic use of violence. To a certain extent, he was a critical dissident and intellectual thinker with a hard-nosed interest based approach compared to more utopian religious dogmatic leaders.[30] His strategy for decentralized terrorism by autonomous cells without fixed bases or traceable organizational ties became the way for survival of *al-Qaeda* after losing the physical bases in Afghanistan in 2001. *Al-Qaeda*'s decentralized cells are

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[25] Scott Atran, *Talking to the Enemy: Faith, Brotherhood, and the (Un)Making of Terrorists* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 2010), 99.
[26] Aaron, *In Their Own Words*, 197.
[27] IntelCenter, Osama bin Laden Message Analysis & Threat Assessment, 8 November 2004.
[28] Abu Bakr Naji, *The Management of Savagery: The Most Critical Stage Through Which the Umma Will Pass*, trans. William McCants (West Point, NY: Combating Terrorism Center, 2006), 21, http://www.wcfia.harvard.edu/olin/images/Management%20of%20Savagery%20-%2005-23-2006.pdf
[29] Carsten Bockstette, "Jihadist Terrorist Use of Strategic Communication Management Techniques," *George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies*, Occasional Paper Series, no. 20 (December 2008), 11.
[30] Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad*, 371.

today mostly linked by ideology and solidarity by the means of decentralized protracted guerilla tactics.[31] This also becomes evident in recently declassified documents, which show that *al-Qaeda* affiliates "sought bin Laden's blessing on symbolic matters, such as declaring an Islamic state, and wanted a formal union to acquire the *al-Qaeda* brand."[32]

Even though it is an obvious contradiction of the strategic aim of luring Western troops into Muslim lands, a further stated strategic objective is to drive those they call *kuffār* (non-believers) from Muslim lands.[33] One promising approach to achieve this end is to attack allies of the US-led coalition that are judged the most vulnerable (e.g., those with weak governments or poor public support for involvement to induce their governments to withdraw their troops). The underlying strategy is to isolate the United States by dividing and undermining its coalition, forcing the US and its allies to pull out.[34] This strategy could well have been copied from Clausewitz who stated, "The [act] we consider most important for the defeat of the enemy [is] the following: … Delivery of an effective blow against his principal ally."[35] This sentiment is seconded by Sun Tzu and his commentators, "When he is united, divide him. *Chang Yü:* Sometimes drive a wedge between a sovereign and his ministers; on other occasions separate his allies from him ... Then you can plot against them."[36]

The Norwegian Defense Research Establishment provides evidence of this aim in *al-Qaeda* strategic thinking, quoting from an *al-Qaeda* planning manuscript on a radical Islamic Web site in December 2003: "We think that the Spanish government could not tolerate more than two, maximum three blows, after which it will have to withdraw as a result of popular pressure. If its troops still remain in Iraq after those blows, then the

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[31] Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad*, 7-8.
[32] Lahoud, *Letters from Abbottabad*, 12.
[33] Gendron, "Al-Qaeda: Propaganda and Media Strategy," 8.
[34] Carsten Bockstette, "Taliban and Jihadist Use of Strategic Communication," *Connections-The Quarterly Journal*, vol. VIII, no. 3, (Summer 2009):1-24, 6-7.
Chapter two and three are based on and contain elements of by the author previously published essays: Carsten Bockstette, "Terrorist Exploit Information Technologies", *per Concordiam Journal of European Security and Defense Issues*, vol. 1 issue 3, (October 2010); Bockstette, "Taliban and Jihadist Use of Strategic Communication;" Bockstette, "Jihadist Terrorist Use of Strategic Communication Management Techniques."
[35] Clausewitz, *On War*, 596.
[36] Sun Tzu, *Illustrated Art of War*, 100.

victory of the Socialist Party is almost secured, and the withdrawal of the Spanish forces will be on its electoral program."[37] The tract called to exploit the March 2004 elections in Spain.[38] The last Spanish troops left Iraq in May 2004.[39] *Al-Qaeda*'s attacks were aimed to serve both coercive and deterrent ends. Stathis N. Kalyvas explains how violence can serve both purposes at once: "Coercive violence [terrorism] may be strategic and tactical at the same time. Targeting a person to eliminate a particular risk is tactical, but using this act of violence so as to deter others from engaging in similar behavior is strategic."[40]

Al-Qaeda, aiming to be the leader of a coalition of *Salafi-Jihadi-Takfiri* Terroristic groups,[41] seeks to build a mass consciousness of the *Ummah* via its terroristic strategy using its regional affiliates (*al-Qaeda in Iraq, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, Abu Sayyaf Group,* etc.) to co-opt and aggregate the effects of multiple, diverse local actors around the globe and point them towards the goals of its grand strategy. *Al-Qaeda* provides these entities, to a greater or lesser extent, with strategic direction, technical and logistical assistance, and propaganda.[42]

In awareness of *al-Qaeda's* losses in 2010 in Waziristan and the ruthless conduct of *al-Qaeda's jihadi* affiliates compelled bin Laden to reassess *al-Qaeda's* strategy. He came to the conclusion to "ensure the safety and security of the remaining brothers" was of strategic importance, even if this would mean a slower pace of operations and it reiterated his understanding of the importance of reestablishing centralized control.[43]

3.3 Tactical Goals

Al-Qaeda's tactics and techniques for assessing and attacking targets underscore their fanatic ideological conviction. At the tactical level, *al-Qaeda* aims to provoke,

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[37] Media Committee for the Victory of the Iraqi People 2003 quoted in Aaron, *In Their Own Words,* 238.
[38] Atran, *Talking to the Enemy,* 195.
[39] BBC News, "Last Spanish troops leave Iraq," *BBC.co.uk,* 21 May 2004, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/3734751.stm.
[40] Kalyvas, *Logic of Violence in Civil War,* 27.
[41] Kilcullen, *Accidental Guerrilla*, 28.
[42] Kilcullen, *Accidental Guerrilla*, 14.
[43] Lahoud, *Letters from Abbottabad,* 16-17.

intimidate, protract, and exhaust. *Al-Qaeda* provokes via atrocities, prompting their enemies to (over-)react in ways that harm their opponent's interests and alienate the Muslim population, allowing *al-Qaeda* to further exploit the created instability as David Kilcullen so eloquently describes in his work *The Accidental Guerrilla*.[44] Secondly, *al-Qaeda* aims at preventing cooperation with apostate governments, coercing the local populace by killing those who collaborate.[45] Following lines of reasoning similar to those used by Mao Tse-Tung and Che Guevara, the group also seeks to protract the conflict in order to deplete their enemies' resources, erode their political will, and gain support of the *Ummah* while at the same time avoiding losses. Additionally, *al-Qaeda* aims to impose costs on their opponents in lives, resources, and political capital to coerce their enemies and further higher strategic goals.[46]

Many *al-Qaeda* statements sanction killing infidels and collateral damage. This includes the exceptional killing of Muslims in order to be able to kill heretics and apostates. Al-Zarqawi in 2005 justified this position, stating, "We cannot kill infidels without killing some Muslims. It is unavoidable … killing of infidels by any method … has been sanctified by many scholars even if it meant killing innocent Muslims."[47] The focus is on maximizing the number of victims by exploiting the lethal power of the material and attack objects used. Suicide bombers are usually the weapon of choice. Their operatives go well beyond basic description of a potential target. *Al-Qaeda*'s preparation usually includes sophisticated analysis of target vulnerabilities including building construction and examination of the emergency response systems. Especially al-Suri's works on training, preparation, weapons, and explosive manuals are widely referenced and applied.[48] For example, al-Suri writes that for "shooting practices this must be done by creating necessary areas and suitable conditions in caves … and uninhabited mountains … vast forests … deserts … etc., taking great security

[44] Kilcullen, *Accidental Guerrilla, 14-32.*
[45] Kilcullen, *Accidental Guerrilla*, 30.
[46] Kilcullen, *Accidental Guerrilla*, 32.
[47] Aaron, *In Their Own Words,* 104.
[48] Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad,* 23.

precautions."[49] Al-Suri's strategy for a protracted war propagates the more tactical first stage of guerrilla warfare thus:

> The first stage: It is called the stage of exhaustion. It is the stage of small guerrillas and limited terrorist warfare, where the guerillas, which are small in number, rely upon the methods of assassination, small raids and ambushes, and selective bomb attacks to confuse the enemy, regardless of whether the enemy is a colonial power or a despotic regime. The aim is to reach a state of security exhaustion, political confusion, and economic failure. … [The] Weapons of the first stage: Are primitive weapons and personal one-man weapons, such as revolvers and light and medium machine guns at the most, light anti-tank weapons such as the R.P.G. and its equivalents, hand grenades, as well as home-made and military explosives.[50]

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[49] Abu Mus'ab al-Suri quoted in Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad*, 478.
[50] Abu Mus'ab al-Suri quoted in Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad*, 471-472.
For a complete overview of al-Suri's stages of Guerrilla warfare, see Appendix A.

3.4 Chapter Conclusion

As Table 2 illustrates below, *al-Qaeda* has strategic and grand strategic ends that have been translated down to the tactical level. Terrorist attacks utilizing *Jihad-Martyr-Takfir* tactics have caused much damage death and suffering. However, these limited military successes have achieved significant success in neither their strategic nor grand strategic goals, aside from luring the US and its allies into conflict in Muslim lands in a limited way. The sole focus in *jihadi* terrorism as overarching strategy seems, at least with a short time perspective, to be a failing military strategy.

FIRST HALF OF THE STRATEGY COIN *Al-Qaeda's Strategy*			
Level	**ENDS (Goals/Objects)**	**WAYS (Concepts/Ideology)**	**MEANS (Tools/Resources)**
Grand Strategy	• Global Caliphate • Islamic Emirates • In *Sharia* fused society and governance • United *Ummah*	• *Salafi-Jihadi-Takfir* ideology • *Sharia* based society • *Sharia* based governance • *Seizure of territory* • Uniting the *Ummah* • *Establishing a first core Emirate*	• *Salafi-Jihadi-Takfir* Terrorism practicing a Islamic Vanguard concept • Strategic Communication
Strategy	• 1. *Al-Qaeda* Survival • 2. Free Muslim lands • 3. Establish *Sharia* rule • 4. Eliminate the "near enemy" • 5. Eliminate the "far enemy" • 6. Eliminate Israel.	• *Salafi-Jihadi-Takfir* Terrorism practicing a Islamic Vanguard concept to *intimidate, protract and to exhaust the enemy*	• *Jihad-Martyr-Takfir* terroristic attacks • Decentralized protracted guerilla *Jihad-Martyr-Takfir* tactics • Economic and financial bleeding of opponents
Tactics	• Successful *Jihad-Martyr-Takfir* terroristic attacks • Decentralized protracted guerilla tactics to *intimidate, protract and to exhaust the enemy*	• Recruit, train, and radicalize adherents • Deception • Psychological operations • Operations security • Physical destruction • Military deception	• *Jihad-Martyr-Takfir* terroristic attacks

Table 2. FIRST HALF OF THE STRATEGY COIN
Source: Authors' Original Work

However, the purpose is not to win a symmetric military confrontation at this time. The primary aim of the attacks is to function as an inciter to catalyze the population to act as a communication channel in order to intimidate, coerce and propagate aimed at furthering *al-Qaeda*'s grand political and strategic agenda. Thus, the tactical attacks are mainly aimed at helping in communicating messages-as will be depicted in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4 - *JIHADI* COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

We are in a battle, and that more than half of this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media.
-Ayman Al-Zawahiri 2005

4.1 Grand Communication Strategy

Al-Qaeda's grand strategic communication ends are inseparable from its grand political strategy. The ends of the group's grand communications strategy are the support for the grand strategic and strategic ends, ways, and means and their credibility and legitimacy executing its *Salafi-Jihadi-Takfir* Terrorism strategy as the *Ummah'* s Vanguard. *Al-Qaeda* aims to further this by the way of instilling and gaining adherence to *Salafi-Jihadi-Takfir* Ideology, *Sharia*-based society and governance, and uniting the *Ummah* behind their cause. Al-Suri's significance to *al-Qaeda*'s communication grand strategy is paramount.[1] He designed the unofficial blueprint for *al-Qaeda*'s communication strategy's ends, ways, and means, as is evident in his epic 1,600 page work *The Military Theory of the Global Islamic Resistance Call*:

> These [political] factors include the presence of a cause in which the local inhabitants can believe, in a way that is sufficient for making them fight a *jihad* for its sake. Also, that cause must be able to mobilize the Islamic Nation behind it, so that the nation will help this people succeed, and fight a *jihad* with them, with their spirit and money… and other kinds of support. The most suitable cause among the causes that instigate resistance is foreign aggression and an abundance of religious, political economic and social reasons for revolution and *jihad*. This is called 'revolutionary climate' in books about guerilla warfare, and in our literature, we will term it '*jihadi* climate.'[2]

Thanks to communication technology, *al-Qaeda* is theoretically able to reach any conceivable international desired audience. This communication technology as a means

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[1] The Syrian al-Suri, as a potent political and ideological figure is and at the same time is not a key *al-Qaeda* strategic mastermind. He trained a generation of jihadist at *al-Qaeda's* Afghan camps and helped in establishing *al-Qaeda's* vast European networks. He crafted practical ways to implement *jihadi* guerrilla warfare including withering critiques of the *jihadi* movement after assessing terrorist campaigns. As a dissident and critic, he never became part of the central *al-Qaeda* leadership, but his influence as charismatic and prophetic strategist ensured is political impact on *al-Qaeda's* strategy, especially after 2001.

[2] *Abu Mus'ab al-Suri* quoted in Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad*, 375.

enables them to attack governments via terrorist attacks that are far beyond its operational territory by influencing populations and using them as a communication channel.[3] As Abu Bakr Naji stated, "[W]e want to communicate our *Sharia*, military, and political positions to the people clearly and justify them rationally and through the *Sharia* and (show that) they are in the (best) interest of the *Ummah*."[4] The communication strategy serves to reach the desired end state of establishing a global devout Caliphate with a *Sharia*-based Islamic government.

Since terrorism is essentially a communication strategy, the focus of *al-Qaeda* is therefore heavy on the communicative vs. the guerrilla aspect within the scope of irregular warfare. Ayman Al-Zawahiri put it thus: "I say to you: that we are in a battle, and that more than half of this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media. And that we are in a…race for the hearts and minds of our [Muslim nation]. And that however far our [military] capabilities reach, they will never be equal to one thousandth of the capabilities of the kingdom of Satan that is waging war on us."[5]

The utopian elements of *al-Qaeda*'s grand strategy and the eschatological worldview of its ideology serve a significant purpose: utopia is not only the goal of *al-Qaeda*'s violence, but also serves as *al-Qaeda*'s moral and religious justification in the application of terrorism as a legitimate strategic way and tactical mean.[6] *Al-Qaeda*'s primary long-term grand communication strategy aims at the enlargement of their movement. Uniting the *Ummah* behind *al-Qaeda*, as a grand strategy way, is of the utmost importance for the group's ultimate success. The grand strategic ways also serve to propagate the *Sharia* based society and governance as well as seeking to justify *Salafi-Jihadi-Takfir* Ideology. Abu Bakr Naji explains the ways and means thus, "Developing

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[3] John Mackinlay, *The Insurgent Archipelago-From Mao to bin Laden* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2009), 79.
[4] Naji, *Management of Savagery*, 96.
[5] Open Source Center, "*Report: Complete Text of Al-Zawahiri 9 July 2005 Letter to Al-Zarqawi*," (Washington, D.C.: Open Source Center, 11 October 2005), OSC document FEA20061002028254).
[6] Gendron, "Al-Qaeda: Propaganda and Media Strategy;," Steven R. Corman and Jill S. Schiefelbein, "Communication and Media Strategy in the Islamist War of Ideas," in *Weapons of Mass Persuasion-Strategic Communication To Combat Violent Extremism* ed. Steven R. Corman and Angela Trethewey and H.L. Goodall, Jr. (New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing 2008); Bockstette, "Taliban and Jihadist Use of Strategic Communication," 13.

the media strategy such that it reaches and targets the heart of the middle leadership of the armies of apostasy in order to push them to join the *jihad*. … Establishing a media plan which seeks, in each of these stages, rational and *Sharia* justification for the operations, especially [targeting] the masses. [It must be a plan] which escapes the captivity of targeting individuals of the other Islamic groups, who already understand everything!"[7]

Creating and maintaining *al-Qaeda*'s social and religious viability while engaging in terroristic acts requires a continuous communication effort. This reinforces the image of communications as a central means of *al-Qaeda*'s grand strategy. *Al-Qaeda*'s violent methods and the killing of innocent people inevitably contradict many of the teachings of Islam and tend to undermine the legitimacy of their ends. *Al-Qaeda* aims to mitigate this inherent limitation of their legitimacy through an unceasing communication campaign. Therefore, efforts to secure legitimacy through ostensible demonstration of compliance with Islamic law are prominent in the group's grand communication strategy.[8] *Al-Qaeda*'s grand strategic communication mean is their credibility and legitimacy in executing its *Salafi-Jihadi Takfir* Terrorism strategy as the *Ummah's* Vanguard. Without significant believe in its credibility and legitimacy by the *Ummah*, their strategy in total becomes powerless.

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4.2 Communication Strategy

Based on their grand communication strategy, *al-Qaeda* aims to develop a communication strategy to further the above. Abu Mus'ab al-Suri, as an *al-Qaeda* realist and critical thinker who was acutely aware of the importance of communication strategy, advised, "It is … among the strategic principles of the Global Islamic Resistance Call to use arguments, explanations and legal and political evidence, and logical realism not weapons and swords to confront this heretic group of propagandists for Satan and the

[7] Naji, *Management of Savagery*, 21.
[8] Bockstette, "Taliban and Jihadist Use of Strategic Communication," 13.

Sultan's clerics, who call people to the ports of Hell."[9] Al-Zawahiri promulgated *al-Qaeda*'s communication strategy and its ways and means thus:

> The media war against the regime is no less important than the military war, especially as the regime is thoroughly embroiled in all manner of corruption—ideologically, ethically, politically and financially—leaving it vulnerable on these grounds to media assaults. Thus it is necessary that the *mujahedeen* operations have a media orientation toward issues of concern to the people. The effects of the operations in this regard must therefore be carefully studied before they are carried out … Finally, it is necessary to emphasize that the Islamist movements must adopt the confrontation with Israel and America, so that they attract the masses to the fight and to the critical strike against the regime.[10] This also includes analyzing the enemy's media communications, as Abu Bakr Naji explained, "Therefore, understanding the media politics of the adversaries and dealing with them is very important in winning the military and political battle.[11]

Based on their ideology and strategy, *al-Qaeda* is knowingly or unknowingly using master narratives[12] as a means to propagate its message and further its agenda. *Al-Qaeda* aims to exploit deep-seated belief systems founded in ethnic, religious, and cultural identities to muster support for their grand strategic aims.[13] This includes the attack of high-profile symbolic targets that have the potential of provoking enemy governments to over-react, harming their own long-term interests, so that *al-Qaeda* can strategically profit.[14] The master narratives and the vision they propagate serve as resources for the strategic rhetorical efforts toward desired audiences to align their views

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[9] *Abu Mus'ab al-Suri* quoted in Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad*, 409.
[10] Al-Zawahiri quoted in Assaf Moghadam and Brian Fishman, *Self-Inflicted Wounds Debates and Divisions within al-Qa'ida and its Periphery* (West Point, NY: Combating Terrorism Center, 2010), Harmony Project, 87.
http://www.ctc.usma.edu/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/Self-Inflicted-Wounds.pdf
[11] Naji, *Management of Savagery*, 95.
[12] Master narratives are historically based stories that reflect a community's identity and experiences. They communicate the community's concerns, aspirations and hopes. In addition, such narratives assist in guiding members connect with who they are and where they come from. Finally, master narratives are useful to individuals in understanding unfolding developments around them.
Open Source Center, *Master Narratives Special Report*, 6.
[13] Kilcullen, *Accidental Guerrilla*, 296.
[14] Kilcullen, *Accidental Guerrilla*, 296.

in ways that serve *al-Qaeda*'s ends.[15] The intimidation and coercion of the "near enemy" and "far enemy" by instilling fear is an essential element for these communication stratagems. The strategic narratives depicted in Table 3 below were distilled by the author out of *Open Source Center Master Narratives Report*, the *Master Narratives of Islamist Extremism* and out of *al-Qaeda* documents:[16]

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[15] Jeffry R. Halverson and H. L. Goodall, Jr., and Steven R. Corman, *Master Narratives of Islamist Extremism* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan 2010), 179.
[16] The narratives have been categorized and synthetized by the author. For a complete list of the master narratives as developed by OSC, see Appendix B-G. For a more broad discussion of Islamist extremism master narratives see:
Halverson and Goodall and Corman, *Master Narratives of Islamist Extremism*.

Reasoning		Ends Ways Means	Master Narrative	Messages
Abstract	Goal	Ends	*Restoring the Caliphate*	The creation of a rightly-guided Islamic Caliphate by God united all Muslims in Islam and *Sharia* and freed the *Ummah* of *Jahiliyyah* (Ignorance of God's guidance). The Prophet Mohammed and Islam united the desert tribes to true monist Muslims. The Caliphate spread Islam and was designed to maintain the unity. The once proud Caliphate was destroyed by Western influence and deeds. Muslims have deviated from *Sharia* by abandoning the Caliphate and embracing Western thoughts. Western scheming and attacks divided the *Ummah* into a multitude of pieces. The *Ummah* needs a Vanguard to find out way back to *Sharia* and this correction to the path begins by removing Western influence from our land and then leading the *Ummah* back to the right path. Apostate traitorous Muslim rulers allowed the Caliphates demise. In keeping with the examples of Rightly Guided Caliphs who followed the Prophet Mohamed, Muslims must rebuild the Caliphate with violent *jihad*, restore the *Ummah* to its former glory and magnificence and end Muslim the injustices and suffering.
	Why	Ways	*War on Islam*	From the earliest days of Islam, infidels have conspired against Muslims. The *Ummah* is threatened from all around by foreign infidel troops endangering the *Ummah's* security. The enemies propagate falsehoods of a "moderate" Islam to weaken true Islam and pacify and humiliate the *Ummah* in face of global oppression. All Muslims, therefore, must adhere to the call of *jihad* and join their fellow *mujahedeen* .
	Why	Ways	*Agents of the West*	All Muslim states have fallen from the path of true Islam. Islam's original leaders were distinguished by their passion for *Sharia*, rejection of excess, and their love for *jihad*. Today, apostate rulers betray the legacy of these model leaders. They are agents of Western masters and not adhering to *sharia*. They behave in ways that do not follow the example of the Prophet Mohammad and contravene the core tenets of the true Muslim faith. These apostate leaders exploit Muslim's wealth and further idleness. The *Ummah* must awaken from its slumber and free itself from corruption, humiliation and oppression.
	Why	Means	*The Nakba*	*Al-Nakba*, or catastrophe, when Palestinians loss of their homes and lands during the creation of Israel in 1948, is an abomination on Muslim holy lands. *Al-Nakba* persists to this day, and a holocaust in Gaza is being covered up by false peace treaties and secularist apostate Arab leaders, incapable and unwilling to ensure the security of the *Ummah*. Muslims everywhere must rectify this injustice and humiliation. The blessed holy land must be returned to its rightful owners.
	How	Ways & Means	*Violent Jihad*	The Prophet and his successors never neglected their duty to fight the enemies of the *Ummah*. Over time, the Muslims abandoned their obligation to *jihad*, allowing suffering and humiliation to come upon them. The apostate Muslim leaders neglected their religious obligations and put money and stability before Allah. Therefore, Muslims must rise to the defense of the *Ummah* instilling fear with violent *Jihad* to defeat the enemy, and avenge our Muslim brothers.
Concrete	How	Ways & Means	*Blood of the Martyrs*	During the time of the Prophet Mohamed, *mujahedeen* fearlessly and willingly charged into battle against the enemies. Over time, the *Ummah* ignored the fact that sacrifices are needed on the road to victory and to ensure the security of the *Ummah*. Muslims must reawaken their willingness to self-sacrifice against the *Ummah's* enemies and participate in defensive *Jihad*. Each martyr (mean) is a step towards victory in the global war.

Table 3 *AL-QAEDA*'S MASTER NARRATIVES SUMMARIZED
Source: Open Source Center, Master Narratives Special Report

All publications and statements by the *al-Qaeda* leadership can be assessed in the light of this subset of Islamist Extremism narratives appealing to the basic notions of fear, honor, and interest.[17] At the core, these narratives consist of three broad strategic objectives that all narratives support. These objectives are: resist invaders; rebuke

[17] For a more brought discussion of Islamist extremism master narratives see: Halverson and Goodall and Corman, *Master Narratives of Islamist Extremism*.

oppressive apostate Muslim leaders; and, renew Islam by reversing the decline of the Muslim civilization via reestablishing the *Sharia*-based Caliphate. The narratives aim at being persuasive through cultural consciousness. They attempt to link *al-Qaeda*'s cultural eschatological ideological narrative with local narratives and traditions, thereby creating vertical integration from the grand strategic level to the tactical, local level.[18] This communication technique can be "effective because the audience already understands and subscribes to the master narrative, making the argument seem natural and the request reasonable (not to mention the implied threat of consequences for doing otherwise). Collective memories of the dire consequences of invasion contained in the rhetorical vision also produce an emotional (fear) appeal."[19]

Al-Qaeda's narratives provide their audiences a structured, easy to comprehend argument. Based on history as *al-Qaeda* interprets it, the group portrays a problem, identifies a course of required action, and offers rewards to those who follow and execute the required action and show what happens if not.[20] *Al-Qaeda* aims to legitimate their movement by establishing "its social and religious viability while engaging in violent acts that on their face seem to violate the norms of civilized society and the tenets of Islam."[21] The group also propagates their ends by communicating their messages to desired audiences. By the same mean, they intimidate opponents including Muslims who might turn against *al-Qaeda*.[22] At the same time, they are flexible enough to adapt to changing circumstances. For example, after troop withdrawals, *al-Qaeda* communications replace new military fronts in their communications, to keep their stratagems relevant.[23] If the desired audience, the *Ummah*, accepts these master narratives, "they are apt to believe that as bad as things are now, they can only *get* worse in the future. This promotes the belief that going back to the past will solve all problems and provides a built-in logic for rejecting anything in the present associated with the decline. Orienting to this idealized

[18] Halverson and Goodall and Corman, *Master Narratives of Islamist Extremism*, 180.
[19] Halverson and Goodall and Corman, *Master Narratives of Islamist Extremism*, 183.
[20] Open Source Center, *Master Narratives Special Report*, 14.
[21] Corman and Schiefelbein, "Communication and Media Strategy," 69.
[22] Corman and Schiefelbein, "Communication and Media Strategy," 69-70.
[23] Open Source Center, *Master Narratives Special Report*, 14.

past simultaneously helps solidify identity, creates a sense of legitimacy, and sets an unambiguous path ahead."[24]

As a strategic communication means, master narratives depict the (re-) establishment of a Caliphate as *al-Qaeda*'s main objective/interest (Goal-Narrative: *Restoring the Caliphate*). The master narratives portray the external dangers that *al-Qaeda* aims to communicate as threatening the security of the *Ummah* (Why-Narrative: *War on Islam*). Drawing upon contemporary and historical grievances, the narratives paint the *Ummah* as being unsecure and under siege (Why-Narrative: *War on Islam* & *The Nakba*) and propagate the desired Muslim response (How-Narrative: *Violent Jihad* & *Blood of the Martyrs*). These strategic storylines exploit shared feelings of honor, humiliation, insecurity, fear, injustice, and social grievances (Why-Narrative: *War on Islam* & *Agents of the West*).[25] As the authors of the OSC Special Report explain,

> The narratives emphasize themes of shared humiliation, injustice, faithful duty, and the promise of reestablishing a golden age. Further, they draw on a robust set of historical evidence—from the earliest days of Islam to today's hot zones—applicable to diverse audiences and geographies, giving *al-Qaeda* communicators the flexibility they need to use these master narratives across varied strategic and communications fronts. Historical depth and geographic breadth makes these stories enduring, dramatic, and highly resilient. This resilience is likely to impact the success of counter-massaging efforts designed to directly combat or undermine these master narratives.[26]

The narratives strive to capitalize on local economic and governmental grievances in Muslim countries. The perceived endemic Muslim poverty and political marginalization by the West is a key theme (Why-Narrative: *War on Islam*). *Al-Qaeda* is animated by the perceived Arab dishonor at the power imbalance of the West. Angela Gendron, a Senior Fellow with the Canadian Centre of Intelligence and Security Studies, explains, "[t]his deep-seated and festering sore lies at the heart of *al-Qaeda*'s ideology, although it is couched in religious terms."[27]

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[24] Corman and Schiefelbein, "Communication and Media Strategy," 91.
[25] Open Source Center, *Master Narratives Special Report,* 15.
[26] Open Source Center, *Master Narratives Special Report,* 9.
[27] Gendron, "Al-Qaeda: Propaganda and Media Strategy," 7.

By depicting Muslim leaders as apostate Western agents (a strategic communications strategic mean), *al-Qaeda* leaders and propagandists bridge the "far enemy" and the "near enemies" by blaming the Muslim suffering on corrupt Muslim governments who exploit natural resources to enrich themselves and their Western masters (Why-Narrative: *Agents of the West*).[28] This becomes evident in a 2009 *Al-Sahab* video that states, "…the Crusader West aligned itself with the tyrants of the Islamic world, those that have carried out their roles by bringing forth an array of scholars, academics, media personalities, and artists to aid in the spread of defeatist ideas to promote inaction, spread atheisms, tinker with the Shari'ah, and spread the roots of laziness and idleness among the ranks of the Muslims."[29] These videos often show Muslim and Western leaders together, to provide evidence of the collaboration. Moreover, *Al-Qaeda*'s leader Ayman Al-Zawahiri explained in a 2011 audio statement that:

> Every free and honest person must be aware of the crimes of these corrupt regimes, which repress our *Ummah* and fight its creed, prevent its daughters from wearing the hijab, squander its wealth, and encourage immorality, profligacy, and moral and social degeneration. These regimes are an inseparable part of a global system that aims to fight Islam and Muslims, led by the United States. These regimes are proxies for the global powers. They aid them and implement their policies represented in fighting Islam and the hijab, changing the education curricula, normalizing relations with Israel, preventing the Islamic Shari'ah from ruling the people, and usurping the Muslims' resources. Thus, these global powers extend their support to these local regimes and overlook their crimes, oppression, repression, deception, rigging, and looting.[30]

The aim of connecting local, especially young audiences to *al-Qaeda*'s global objectives can persist indefinitely by the allegations of Muslim rulers acting as agents of the West. A key audience for *al-Qaeda* is the growing young Muslim generation as Abu

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[28] Open Source Center, *Master Narratives Special Report*, 15.
[29] Open Source Center, "Al-Sahab Video Discusses Economic Crisis, Arab 'Corruption,' Torture, Part 1 of 2," *Jihadist Websites (Al-Sahab Media Establishment*), (Washington, D.C.: Open Source Center, 22 September 2009, OSC document FEA20091113975044.
[30] Open Source Center, "Al-Sahab Releases Al-Zawahiri Audio Message to People in Egypt, Part 3," *Ansar Dawlat al-Iraq al-Islamiyah (Al-Sahab Establishment for Media Production)*, (Washington, D.C.: Open Source Center, 28 February 2011), OSC document GMP20110228086002.

Mus'ab al-Suri suggests: "We must open the minds and hearts of the Islamic Nation's youth, so that they feel commitment to the Islamic Nation as a whole. This is a fundament in the religion and the faith, as well as in the politics and the strategic military concept."[31]

Al-Suri's writings have a widening appeal to new audiences. These include especially young, well-educated Muslims in Western Societies. As Norwegian historian Brynjar Lia explains, "Westernized Muslims … seem to be motivated more by a mixture of leftist radicalism and militant pan-Islamic nationalism than by religiosity. Just as Marxism's alleged scientific basis appealed to young European students, so al-Suri's works-with their explicit emphasis on rationality, scientific research, self-criticism and learning form past mistakes-might have some of the same impact on young Muslims."[32]

Al-Qaeda uses Western troops and their military action in the Muslim world as a powerful visual to reinforce a crucial master narrative in its communications strategy. The presence of Western troops, and edited footage of their actions taken out of context and spliced together with quotations or exhortations, produce the desired graphic footage of Western occupation of Islamic nations that furthers their media-centered strategy (Why-Narrative: *War on Islam*). The strategy thrives on images and words about every civilian killed. Building on this, the terrorists call for the end of foreign influence in Muslim countries and perceived Muslim territory such as that occupied by Israel (i.e., Jerusalem and the Dome of the Rock).[33]

Consequently, Ayman Al-Zawahiri repeatedly invokes the *Nakba* narrative depicted in Table 3 (Why-Narrative: *The Nakba*) since "the slogan which the masses of the Muslim *Ummah* have understood and responded to well for 50 years is the slogan of calling for *jihad* against Israel."[34] Despite this narrative, however, *al-Qaeda* is itself not actively fighting the state of Israel. This creates a communication strategy disconnect.

As a communication-channel and a vital means to the strategy, *al-Qaeda* expanded the use of the Internet considerably after 2001 and continuing advances in

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[31] Abu Mus'ab al-Suri quoted in Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad*, 370.
[32] Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad*, 8-9.
[33] Gendron, "Al-Qaeda: Propaganda and Media Strategy," 8.
[34] Al-Zawahiri as cited in Open Source Center, *Master Narratives Special Report*, 18.

communication technology greatly simplified this media exploitation. The communication revolution has enabled *al-Qaeda* to evolve into a global movement. The movement is, in the words of John Mackinlay, a Teaching Fellow in the War Studies Department, King's College London, "de-territorialized and globally connected."[35] This provides *al-Qaeda* with a robust public relations capability to communicate its narratives. Additionally, the group uses the internet for a variety of other purposes including financing, recruiting, logistics support, a means to conduct debate, provide training, and even resolve disputes.[36]

One of those reoccurring disputes is on the killing of innocent Muslims. As *The Washington Post* reported in 2012, a few months before bin Laden's death in 2011, "Web sites linked to *al-Qaeda* ran excited commentary about a proposed new killing machine dubbed the 'human lawn mower.' The idea was to attach rotating blades to the front of a pickup truck and drive the contraption into crowds." According to a former U.S. intelligence official who viewed the seized documents from bin Laden's former hideout in Abbottabad "[Bin Laden] was upset about it. … He felt it conflicted with his vision for what he wanted *al-Qaeda* to be."[37] In a letter attributed bin Laden, bin Laden advised, that "jihadis should devote their energy not to *jihad* but to *I'dad*, or 'preparing for *jihad*,' and … that the longer regime'[s] cling[s] to power and fails the people, the more time *jihadis* have for *I'dad* and to win the sympathy of the public."[38]

Al-Qaeda also uses the internet for internal secure communication using 128-byte advanced encryption software with high profile algorithms.[39] User-generated content through means such as blogs are frequently used as they have become very popular throughout the Muslim world.[40] Online games are exploited for *al-Qaeda* conference

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[35] Mackinlay, *Insurgent Archipelago*, 5.
[36] Dell Dailey quoted in Forest, *Influence Warfare* 2.
[37] Warrick, "Bin Laden's last stand," 1.
[38] Lahoud, *Letters from Abbottabad*, 32.
[39] Eric Schmitt and Thom Shanker, *Counterstrike-The Untold Story of America's Secret Campaign Against Al Qaeda* (New York, NY: Times Books, 2011), 146.
[40] Aidan Kirby Winn and Vera L. Zakem, "Jihad.com 2.0-The New Social Media and the Changing Dynamics of Mass Persuasion," in Forest, *Influence Warfare*, 33.

calls and some analysts have suggested the group uses steganography[41] to hide operational and guidance documents.[42] *Al-Qaeda* transcended into a "new form of existence" by giving up the conventional network structure of their hierarchy.[43] Steve Coll and Susan Glasser explained the new hierarchical structure thus, "*Al-Qaeda* has become the first guerrilla movement in history to migrate from physical space to cyberspace. With laptops and DVDs, in secret hideouts and at neighborhood Internet cafes, young code-writing *jihadists* have sought to replicate the training, communication, planning, and preaching facilities they lost in Afghanistan with countless new locations on the Internet."[44] Embedded messages can have an insidious impact on the user, as they may alter values, ideas and attitudes.[45] Consequently, the Libyan religious scholar and frequent spokesperson of *al-Qaeda,* Abu Yahya al-Libi praised the "*mujahedeen* on the information frontline" stating, "May Allah bless you lions of the front, for by Allah, the fruits of your combined efforts-sound, video and text-are more severe for the infidels and their lackeys than the falling of rockets and missiles on their heads."[46]

Al-Qaeda does not have the bureaucratic constraints of state actors, enabling them to have a flexible, innovative and fast decision cycle.[47] According to the US State Department's counterterrorism chief and former special operator, Dell Dailey, "*Al-Qaeda* and other terrorists' center of gravity lies in the information domain, and it is there that we must engage it."[48] Terrorism expert Bruce Hoffman affirms, "Virtually every terrorist group in the world today has its own Internet website and, in many instances, multiple

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[41] *Steganography* is the art and science of miniaturizing and hiding information within empty spaces or unused bits in digital formats.
[42] Schmitt and Shanker, *Counterstrike,* 150-151.
[43] Sebastian Gorka and David Kilcullen, "Who's Winning the Battle for Narrative? Al-Qaeda versus the United States and Its Allies," in Forest, *Influence Warfare,* 235.
[44] Steve Coll and Susan B. Glasser, "e-Qaida from Afghanistan to the Internet: Terrorists Turn to the Web as Base of Operations," *Washington Post*, August 7, 2005.
[45] Aidan Kirby Winn and Vera L. Zakem, "Jihad.com 2.0-The New Social Media and the Changing Dynamics of Mass Persuasion," in Forest, *Influence Warfare,* 37.
[46] Abu Yahya al-Libi, "Al-Sahab Issues Video Statement by Abu-Yahya al-Libi, English Translation," (Washington, D.C.: Open Source Center, 28 March 2007), OSC document GMP20070328031003001.pdf.
[47] Forest *Influence Warfare,* xvii.
[48] Bruce Hoffman, "Foreword," in Forest, *Influence Warfare,* vii.

sites in different languages with different messages tailored to specific audiences."[49] Dailey continues this line, noting, "The art of terrorist communication has evolved to a point where the terrorists themselves can new control the entire production process: determining the content, context and medium over which their message is projected; and towards precisely the audience they seek to reach."[50] The ubiquity of the Internet as communication channel provides *al-Qaeda* with something close to its own media entity. *Al-Qaeda* does not have to rely on third party TV stations to record and distribute their messages.[51] By arguing that the West is intrinsically hostile to the Muslim World, *al-Qaeda* aims at strategically justifying its terrorist *jihad* strategy as defensive resistance "to halt the Western juggernaut."[52] This communication strategy is intended to transcend the justification of terroristic attacks *al-Qaeda*'s only means to further their grand strategic goals-down to the tactical level. However, the decentralization inherently comes with the price of decreased message control for the *al-Qaeda* leadership.[53]

4.3 Communication Tactics

The tactic of committing terroristic attacks is supposed to serve numerous purposes in order to advance strategic ends and thereby reach the grand strategic goal. Next to producing training materials and graphic footage for education and gaining experience, these attacks aim mainly at sending messages to multiple audiences. These tactics also include the marketing of *al-Qaeda*'s brand and their ideology via commercial products in local stores offering paraphernalia such as DVDs and t-shirts with logos such as "Giants of *Jihad*" and "Waiting for the Destruction of Israel."[54] Abu Bakr Naji advised the active exploitation of media access, stating, "In this case, it is possible to use a quantity of explosives which not only destroys the building or even levels it to the

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[49] Bruce Hoffman, "The Use of the Internet by Islamic Extremists," *Testimony presented to the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence* (May 4, 2006), 18, http://rand.org/pubs/testimonies/CT262-1.
[50] Hoffman, "The Use of the Internet by Islamic Extremists."
[51] Simon O'Rourke, "Online Recruitment, Radicalization, and Reconnaissance-Challenges for Law Enforcement," in Forest, *Influence Warfare*, 222.
[52] Sammy Salama and Joe-Ryan Bergoch, "Al-Qaeda's Strategy for Influencing Perceptions in the Muslim World," in Forest, *Influence Warfare*, 301.
[53] Sammy Salama and Joe-Ryan Bergoch, "Al-Qaeda's Strategy for Influencing Perceptions in the Muslim World," in Forest, *Influence Warfare*, 305.
[54] Atran, *Talking to the Enemy*, 154.

earth; it makes the earth completely swallow it up. By doing so, the amount of the enemy's fear is multiplied and good media goals are achieved, the most prominent of which is the enemy's inability to conceal its losses. Similar operations have to be repeated over and over and a number of good results will be achieved as a consequence."[55] The revolution in communication technologies provides the potential to mobilize dispersed and disaffected Muslims on a global scale.[56] As John Mackinlay explains, "The news value of an act of violence now outweighed its tactical value."[57] The open public availability of *al-Qaeda*'s training and radicalization material and decentralized network structure have dumbed down the sophistication and scale of their attacks to a usually tactical significance.[58] Large scale attacks with imitate strategic implications are no longer the norm. The tactical guidance often starts with communicating statements before an attack in order to increase its impact. As Abu Bakr Naji points out,

> Statements through audio or visual media prepare everyone for the operations before they are undertaken—without specification, naturally—and they are justified afterwards through a powerful, rational, *sharia*-based justification, which the addressed class heeds. These statements should be communicated to all of the people, not just to the elite. Most of the statements should include our general goals which are acceptable to the people, even if they are not stated explicitly: We fight in order to get rid of the enemies of the Umma and their agents who have destroyed the beliefs of the countries and plundered their wealth and made us into their servants. As everyone can see, they are clearly destroying everything. They are even extracting the cost of their murder and destruction from us.[59]

However, due to the ruthlessness and indiscriminate attacks and the contradiction to Islam, *al-Qaeda* has to over-proportionally invest in explaining their deeds, especially the killing of innocent Muslims. Consequently, less than ten percent of their internet communications address topics of operational significance. The vast majority is propaganda or of a religious nature, aimed at both justifying their actions as defensive in

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[55] Naji, *Management of Savagery*, 69.
[56] Mackinlay, *Insurgent Archipelago*, 58.
[57] Mackinlay, *Insurgent Archipelago*, 59.
[58] Schmitt and Shanker, *Counterstrike*, 150.
[59] Naji, *Management of Savagery*, 110.

nature and furthering their ideology.[60] *Al-Qaeda* aims at tactically achieving justification, legitimatization, and propagation via communication of the master narratives through the most appropriate communication channels addressing the desired audiences. Al-Zarqawi attempted to communicate the master narratives in 2005 (How-Narrative: *Violent Jihad* & *Blood of the Martyrs*) as depicted in above Table 3 thus, "The shedding of Muslim blood … is allowed in order to avoid the greater evil of disrupting *jihad*."[61] Bin Laden even attempted to pronounce that there is such a thing as good terrorism (How-Narrative: *Violent Jihad* & *Blood of the Martyrs*): "Not all terrorism is cursed … We practice the good terrorism which stops them from killing our children in Palestine and elsewhere."[62] Thereby he also alluded to the *Nakba* narrative (Why-Narrative: *The Nakba*). Arguing along a similar line, Al-Zawahiri stated in 2005, "Reform can only take place through *Jihad* for the sake of Allah, and any call for reform that is not through *Jihad* is doomed to death and failure."[63] *Al-Qaeda* uses one verse from the Koran in particular to lend legitimacy to their violent ways: "Kill the idolaters (polytheists) wherever you find them … lie in wait for them at every place of ambush…" purposely neglecting the tempering part "but if they turn [to God] … let them go their way."[64]

Al-Qaeda is forced to constantly defend their terrorist tactics. In a 2001 interview, Osama bin Laden attempted to justify the killing of innocents (How-Narrative: *Violent Jihad* & *Blood of the Martyrs*), saying,

> "They say that the killing of innocents is wrong and invalid, and for proof, they say that the Prophet forbade the killing of children and women, and that is true … but this forbidding of killing children and innocents is not set in stone, and there are other writings that uphold it. God's saying: And if you punish [your enemy] … then punish them with the like of that with which you were afflicted … Ibn Tamiyyah … and many others … say that if the disbelievers were to kill our children and women, then we should not

[60] Sammy Salama and Joe-Ryan Bergoch, "Al-Qaeda's Strategy for Influencing Perceptions in the Muslim World," in Forest, *Influence Warfare*, 293.
[61] Aaron, *In Their Own Words*, 103.
[62] Bin Laden as quoted in Aaron, *In Their Own Words*, 87.
[63] Al-Zawahiri as quoted in Aaron, *In Their Own Words*, 81.
[64] Qur'an 9:5 quoted in Aaron, *In Their Own Words*, 38.

> feel ashamed to do the same to them, mainly to deter them from trying to kill our children and women again."[65]

Similarly, Al-Zawahiri was well aware of the counter-productive implications for *al-Qaida's* strategic and grand strategic ends created by Al-Zarqawi's indiscriminate violence against Muslims. Therefore, Al-Zawahiri tried to guide al-Zarqawi to a less ruthless path. In his 2005 Letter to Al-Zarqawi, he wrote: "Therefore, our planning must strive to involve the Muslim masses in the battle, and to bring the [*jihadist*] movement to the masses and not conduct the struggle far from them."[66] Moreover, the movement "must avoid any action that the masses do not understand or approve..."[67] Al-Zawahiri was well aware that *al-Qaeda* needed to gain and not lose support from the *Ummah* and Al-Zarqawi's tactical and strategical communication failures were a major blow to that strategy not only in Iraq but on a global scale. Al-Zarqawi's tactical and strategic blunders fundamentally endangered strategic and grand strategic aims as the US Director of National Intelligence, Mike McConnell, stated in 2008, "The brutal attacks against Muslim civilians unleashed by [*al-Qaeda*] and the conflicting demands of the various extremist agendas are tarnishing *al-Qaeda*'s self-styled image as the extremist Vanguard. Over the past years, a number of religious leaders and fellow extremists who once had significant influence with *al-Qaeda* have publicly criticized it and its affiliates for the use of violent tactics."[68] Consequently, *al-Qaeda*'s name in Iraq was changed following Zarqawi's death in 2006 in an attempt to mitigate the local and global public relations damage caused by Zarqawi's−even by *al-Qaeda*'s standards−gruesome conduct of *jihad* in Iraq.[69]

The killing of innocent Muslims and the public relations damage nonetheless continued throughout *al-Qaida's* global network. *Al-Qaeda's* affiliates "either did not

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[65] Osama bin Laden unreleased Interview by Tayseer Allouni, 21 October 2001, http://www.terrorisme.net/doc/qaida/001_ubl_interview_c.htm.
[66] Open Source Center, "Report: Complete Text of Al-Zawahiri 9 July 2005 Letter to Al-Zarqawi," (Washington, DC: Open Source Center, October 2005.), OSC document FEA2006100202825411, 11.
[67] Open Source Center, "Report: Complete Text of Al-Zawahiri."
[68] Mike McConnell as quoted in Forest, *Influence Warfare*, 3.
[69] Sammy Salama and Joe-Ryan Bergoch, "Al-Qaeda's Strategy for Influencing Perceptions in the Muslim World," in Forest, *Influence Warfare*, 307.

consult with Bin Laden or were not prepared to follow his directives. … Bin Laden [was] alarmed by the 'increased mistakes' committed by the 'brothers' who are spread over 'many regions,' sought to bring regional *jihadi* groups in line with *al-Qaeda's* vision and code of conduct."[70] As the Middle East, diplomacy and national security journalist of *The Washington Post* and *Pulitzer Prize* winner Joby Warrick stated on April 30, 2012, bin Laden's young new Lieutenant Atiyah Abd al-Rahman, in awareness of bin Laden's aversion to the 'human lawn mower', "began trying to codify rules of behavior for *al-Qaeda* and its affiliates, warning that killings of innocent Muslims would hurt the organization and probably violate *Sharia*, or Islamic law. The killing of Americans—including noncombatants—would meanwhile remain permissible, even obligatory."[71]

Bin Laden was until his death very concerned, that the unnecessary death of Muslim civilians was unacceptable collateral damage, endangering his grand strategy. As the letters form bin Laden's hideout in Abbottabad show, "Bin Laden was concerned that regional *jihadi* groups had expanded the meaning of a classical legal concept [*takfir*] meant to be applied in rare circumstances and turned it from an exception into the norm. As a result, the *jihadis*, he worried, have lost considerable sympathy from the Muslim public; this loss was compounded when 'the mistakes of the *jihadis* were exploited by the enemy, [further] distorting the image of the *jihadis* in the eyes of the *Ummah's* general public and separating them form their popular bases.'"[72] Bin Laden was not controlling his *al-Qaeda* affiliate movements to the extent he desired.

Consequently, bin Laden drafted a memorandum of broad guidelines for *al-Qaeda's* global affiliates. It included guidelines for conducting military activities and equally about media releases. The goal was, "not violate our words with some of our practices."[73] Indiscriminate and unnecessary Muslim killings were to be avoided and all media releases ought to be centralized. As the *CTC Report Letters from Abbottabad* states, "The importance of having a sophisticated and coherent media strategy was

[70] Lahoud, *Letters from Abbottabad*, 12.
[71] Warrick, "Bin Laden's last stand," 2.
[72] Lahoud, *Letters from Abbottabad*, 13.
[73] Lahoud, *Letters from Abbottabad*, 14.

critical for Bin Laden, believing it to be 'a principal element of the battle.'"[74] The memorandum never came to fruition.

4.4 Chapter Conclusion

Al-Qaeda's communication strategy is the central element of their strategic *Salafi-Jihadi-Takfir* Terrorism Islamic Vanguard grand strategy. The depicted obvious contradiction of the violation of civilized norms and the tenets of Islam while propagating the 'true' Islam is at the core of their grand strategy. It forces *al-Qaeda* to permanently focus on explaining the violation of civilized norms and the tenets of Islam. Providing for their social and religious viability while executing *Salafi-Jihadi-Takfir* terror seems nearly impossible, however. Utilizing master narratives as a mean to further their agenda, *al-Qaeda* aims to fuse its irregular warfare strategy with its communication strategy and mitigate these obvious shortcomings and achieve their grand strategic ends.

As depicted in the below Table 4, solely relying on *Salafi-Jihadi-Takfir* attacks as a communication channel as a singular approach to raise awareness of its master narratives is insufficient. This tactical approach does not further the communication strategy nor, more importantly, *al-Qaeda*'s strategy and grand strategy. *Al-Qaeda*'s communication strategy does not flow from means to ends and does not transcend strategic levels.

Gaining viability as the *Ummah*'s Vanguard while indiscrimitly killing Muslim members of the *Ummah* is not a convincing communication strategy. Gaining credibility and legitimacy by executing *a Salafi-Jihadi-Takfir* Terrorism strategy that is killing Muslims is an obvious communication disconnect that is incapable of promoting *al-Qaeda* as the *Ummah'* s Vanguard and the current *al-Qaeda* leadership is incapable or unwilling of preventing it. *Al-Qaeda's* central leadership is aware of the fact that indiscriminate killing of Muslims is harming its strategic ends, but the influence on its affiliates is limited and attempts to increase central control failed thus far.

[74] Lahoud, *Letters from Abbottabad*, 14.

SECOND HALF OF THE STRATEGY COIN *Al-Qaeda's Communication Strategy*			
Level	**ENDS (Goals/Objects)**	**WAYS (Concepts/Ideology)**	**MEANS (Tools/Resources)**
Grand Communication Strategy	Adherence to and belief of the *Ummah* in: • Global Caliphate • Islamic Emirates • In *Sharia* fused governance and society • United *Ummah*	Instilling and gaining adherence to: • *Salafi-Jihadi-Takfir* Ideology • *Sharia* based society • *Sharia* based governance • Uniting the *Ummah*	• Support for the Grand Strategic and Strategic Ends, Ways and Means • Credibility and legitimacy executing its *Salafi-Jihadi-Takfir* Terrorism strategy as the *Ummah'* s Vanguard
Communication Strategy	• *Support for the Grand Strategic and Strategic Ends, Ways and Means* • Credibility and legitimacy executing its *Salafi-Jihadi-Takfir* Terrorism strategy as the *Ummah'* s Vanguard	• *Gain credibility* as the *Ummah'* s Vanguard • *Gain legitimacy as the Ummah's Vanguard* • *Communicate Grand Strategic and Strategic Ends*	• Master Narratives • *Communication Technology* • *Jihad-Martyr-Takfir* terroristic attacks
Communication Tactics	• Successful communication of Master Narratives	• Propagate Master Narratives via the way of using appropriate communication channels to intended Audiences	• *Jihad-Martyr-Takfir* terroristic attacks • Information technology, video equipment, media software • Internet videos, blogs, forums, pages, games, etc. • TV • DVDs, propagandistic publications, night letters, etc.

Table 4. SECOND HALF OF THE STRATEGY COIN

Source: Authors' Original Work

Digital Collections

CHAPTER 5 – SYNTHESIS AND CONCLUSION

What is of supreme importance in war is to attack the enemy's strategy
-Sun Tzu

5.1 Synthesis of Findings

Strategic success is heavily influenced by ideology and culture. The two elements act as a catalyst in the making and execution of strategy in a number of ways. *Al-Qaeda* is constrained in their approach to shaping, designing, and executing their strategy by ideological and cultural blinders and by their strategic preferences based on fear, honor, and interest. *Al-Qaeda*'s worldview is deterministically influenced which limits their strategic approaches.[1] *Al-Qaeda*'s grand strategic demands are incorrigible and implacable. They are "so extreme, that they fall outside the realm of consideration."[2] Islam, just as other religions, has repeatedly been disrupted and wracked by radical undercurrents. As Scott Atran explains, "One constant is that faith in a divine or historically transcendent purpose is often cause enough to excuse even the murdering of innocents."[3]

Al-Qaeda's unresolved strategic disconnects between ends, ways, and means are largely unfathomable within their limited ideological worldview. This dramatically reduces the scope of possible strategic choices for applying ways and means to achieve their ends. Limited military successes have achieved neither significant strategic nor grand strategic ends. The sole focus in *jihadi* terrorism as overarching strategy seems, besides its short-term benefits and successes in areas such as publicity and recruiting, to be a failing military strategy. Besides waging *jihad*, *al-Qaeda* does not seem to have a profound interest in governance.[4] In other words, constant struggle has become an end in and of itself.

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[1] Yarger, *Strategy and the National Security Professional*, 46.
[2] Abrahms, "Strategic Influence Deficit of Terrorism," 161.
[3] Atran, *Talking to the Enemy*, 92.
[4] Aaron, *In Their Own Words-Voices of Jihad*, 109.

More than a decade since its triumphant attacks against the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, *al-Qaeda* is no more than a tiny minority among a collection of loosely connected, self-associated groups around the globe. These groups use the *al-Qaeda* brand and rhetoric but usually have local political aims.[5] According to the *CTC Report Letters from Abbottabad, Al-Qaeda's* affiliates "appear to have … more differences than commonalities."[6] The affiliates do not aim primarily at achieving *al-Qaeda*'s grand strategic aims, they lack substantial military means, and they remain stuck at the infant stage of irregular warfare.

As with all irregular warfare strategies in their infant stage, however, the aim is not to win a military confrontation exclusively with military means. The primary aim of attack is to incite the population; the population then acts as a communication channel allowing the intimidation and coercion of an adversary government and the propagation of the group's ideals and ideology. In this way, *al-Qaeda* seeks to advance their grand political and strategic ends and reach the next stage of irregular warfare. *Al-Qaeda*'s communication strategy is the vital means to achieving their grand strategic ends. Since governments depends to a great degree on the consent of the governed, [7] *al-Qaeda* can only come closer to its strategic ends if it is able to separate governments from their means of control over the population. Instilling fear and uncertainty through threats transmitted and amplified via Internet, television, and social media is one of *al-Qaeda*'s ways to achieve their strategic objectives.[8] *Al-Qaeda*'s terrorist strategy is aimed at communicating the cost of noncompliance to target audiences by attacking the civilian populace.[9] *Al-Qaeda*'s communication strategy strives to polarize the populace by reinterpreting history, religion, and culture, distorting the associated narratives to suit *al-Qaeda*'s ends. This polarization stimulates and amplifies the grievances articulated via

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[5] Sebastian Gorka and David Kilcullen, "Who's Winning the Battle for Narrative? Al-Qaeda versus the United States and Its Allies," in Forest, *Influence Warfare,* 235.
[6] Lahoud, *Letters from Abbottabad,* 20.
[7] Peter Ackermann and Jack Duvall, *A Force More Powerful-A Century of Nonviolent Conflict,* (New York, NY: Palgrave, 2000), 7-9.
[8] Forest, *Influence Warfare,* viii.
[9] Abrahms, "Strategic Influence Deficit of Terrorism," 164.

the master narratives, aiming to connect and exploit local narratives and local grievances common in target Muslim populations.[10]

Al-Qaeda's actions in support of its strategy create a number of contradictions and paradoxes. For example, the contradictions inherent in its violation of civilized norms, as well as the basic eschatological tenets of Islam, in conducting suicide bombing attacks and killing other Muslims forces *al-Qaeda* to endlessly defend their actions. Legitimate social and religious viability for *al-Qaeda*, obtained through the use of master narratives, may be perfectly incompatible with *al-Qaeda*'s tactical and strategic use of terrorism, thereby providing a point of cleavage for attack with potential to sever the critical nodes between *al-Qaeda*'s ideology, actions, messages, and audience.

One can conclude that *al-Qaeda's* reliance on *Salafi-Jihadi-Takfir* attacks as a communication channel as essentially singular tactical approach to raise the attention to its master narratives is insufficient for the group to achieve their strategic ends. This singular tactical approach does not advance their communication strategy. More importantly, it does not advance their strategic and grand strategic ends. *Al-Qaeda*'s communication strategy does not allow means to achieve ends nor does it transfer across strategic levels. As depicted in Chapters One and Two, indiscriminate terrorist attacks alienate the Muslim population. In the words of Stathis N. Kalyvas, "Coercion fails if it merely destroys the subject whose compliance is sought."[11] As Zawahiri's intercepted and translated letter to Zarqawi suggests, *Al-Qaeda*'s current leadership is well aware that its political message is being undermined by the excessive brutality of some terrorist attacks carried out in the group's name. These attacks may rally extremists but they may also increasingly alienate the *Ummah*.[12] As Che Guevara advised, "Assaults and terrorism in indiscriminate form should not be employed" for previously these reasons.[13]

The previous chapters have shown, and like Angela Gendron eloquently expressed in her essay *Al-Qaeda: Propaganda and Media Strategy*, the utopian elements and eschatological worldview of *al-Qaeda* are unattractive for the vast majority of the

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[10] Mackinlay, *Insurgent Archipelago*, 22: Gendron, "Al-Qaeda: Propaganda and Media Strategy," 9.
[11] Kalyvas, *Logic of Violence in Civil War*, 27.
[12] Abrahms, "Strategic Influence Deficit of Terrorism," 164.
[13] Che Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 91.

Muslim population. Gendron points out that the establishment of a global Caliphate is a lofty aspiration that does not connect to local grievances.[14] The notion of the global Caliphate even has the potential to clash with local values and customs. Establishing strict *Sharia* might cause tension with local tribal authorities. The obvious divide between the strategic means of *Salafi-Jihadi-Takfir* terrorism, and the associated vision for an Islamic Vanguard and *al-Qaeda*'s communication strategy utilizing master narratives propagated via *Jihad-Martyr-Takfir* tactics, impedes progress toward their grand strategic ends.

As the last two chapters have shown, there is no effective cohesion between *al-Qaeda*'s grand communication strategy, its functional communication strategy, and the associated communication tactics. *Al-Qaeda*'s communication strategy has been largely ineffective in gaining support from major portions of the *Ummah* specifically towards the latter's conversion or adherence to the *Salafi-Jihadi-Takfir* ideology. Similarly, *al-Qaeda* has been unsuccessful in instilling a broad-based desire for or acceptance of *Sharia*-based society and governance and in uniting the *Ummah* behind *al-Qaeda*'s cause in general. *Al-Qaeda*'s revisionist interpretation of history and world politics is not attractive for the vast majority of Muslims.[15] As Angela Gendron notes, "[*al-Qaeda*] is promoting a 14th century ideology holds little appeal for the majority of Muslims, who have no wish to live under a repressive theocratic dictatorship of the kind [*al-Qaeda*] espouses."[16]

The questionable legitimacy of the group's tactics and targeting are contradicting Islam and counteracting *al-Qaeda*'s desire to increase the number of adherents within the *Ummah*. *Al-Qaeda*'s terrorist tactics and strategy are neither cogent nor convincing to many Muslims. *Al-Qaeda*'s terrorist attacks do not amplify their political grand strategic messages as desired and have an inherent strategic influence deficit.[17] In realization of the failing strategy, the Libyan-born *al-Qaida* member and young bin Laden Lieutenant, Atiyah Abd al-Rahman, "possessed a firmer grasp of the power of the Internet and an

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[14] Gendron, "Al-Qaeda: Propaganda and Media Strategy," 2.
[15] Gendron, "Al-Qaeda: Propaganda and Media Strategy;" Corman and Schiefelbein, "Communication and Media Strategy."
[16] Gendron, "Al-Qaeda: Propaganda and Media Strategy," 19.
[17] Abrahms, "Strategic Influence Deficit of Terrorism;" Forest, *Influence Warfare,* 164.

ambition to modernize *al-Qaeda*'s message … emerged in bin Laden's final year as a key advocate for reining in *al-Qaeda*-inspired carnage in Iraq and other Middle Eastern lands. … The two found common cause in their drive to break the group's affiliates of their use of high-casualty attacks on Muslim civilians. In March 2011, less than two months before bin Laden's death, Atiyah warned *jihadists* against bombing marketplaces, mosques, playgrounds and other sites where innocent Muslims were likely to be killed."[18]

As the CTC report has shown, *al-Qaeda's* former leader, bin Laden, was greatly frustrated "with regional *jihadi* groups and his seeming inability to exercise control over their actions and public statements. … [Bin Laden [was] not in sync on the operational level with its so-called 'affiliates.'"[19] Due to the fading influence of *al-Qaeda's* central leadership, the killings continue and Atiyah was killed in August 2011 allegedly by a US Central Intelligence Agency drone strike a few months after bin Laden.[20] The fundamental divide between what *al-Qaeda* senior leaders want and propagate, versus the desires and interests of local operatives, prohibits *al-Qaeda* from furthering its strategic goals.

Terrorist movements rarely achieve their political goals, due to the poor success rate inherent to the strategy of terrorism.[21] As James J. F. Forest states, "Contrary to the prevailing view that terrorism is an effective means of political coercion, [Max Adams] research suggests that, first, contemporary terrorists groups rarely achieve their policy objectives, and second, the poor success rate is inherent to the tactic of terrorism itself."[22] The indiscriminate violence miscommunicates their political objectives for mainly two reasons. Instead of amplifying their demands, the targeted governments are likely to focus on the terrorist acts rather than their rationale. Also, the terrorist's message for the public often gets lost in the noise of the indiscriminate terrorist violence.[23] *Al-Qaeda* is

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[18] Warrick, "Bin Laden's last stand," 2.
[19] Lahoud, *Letters from Abbottabad*, 1.
[20] Mark Mazzetti, "C.I.A. Drone Is Said to Kill Al Qaeda's No. 2," *New York Times Online*, 27 August 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/28/world/asia/28qaeda.html.
[21] Robert Pape and Kurth Cronin offer a different view: Kurth Cronin, *How Terrorism Ends;* Robert Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (New York, NY: Random House, 2005).
[22] Forest, *Influence Warfare*, xiii-xiv; Abrahms, "Strategic Influence Deficit of Terrorism."
[23] Forest, *Influence Warfare*, xiv.

incapable of bringing their messages, the communication channels, and their desired audiences into balance.

Al-Qaeda's desire to gain viability with the *Ummah* as its vanguard, at the same time as it kills its members, is fundamentally counterproductive to the group's communication strategy. Gaining credibility and legitimacy via ruthless killing of *Ummah* members does not promote *al-Qaeda*'s ends. As the Stanford University's political scientist Max Abrahms suggests, "Terrorism is an extremely ineffective coercive instrument precisely because terrorism is an extremely ineffective communication strategy. … Terrorist organizations seldom achieve their political objectives because terrorist acts miscommunicate them to the target country."[24]

Al-Qaeda's inability to achieve their strategic goals of toppling Muslim governments and implementing *Sharia* on state level prompted the alternating focus between the "near" and "far" enemies. As the presence of western troops in Muslim countries decreases, *al-Qaeda's* message theme of "occupation" as a means of recruiting new adherents becomes less palpable; nonetheless, the removal of Western influence is a strategic goal. The Arab Spring shows that popular movements can lead to political or social change without referring primarily to violence. The argument that the West manipulates local Muslim governments, particularly as Muslim populations take to the streets to decide their own fates, is fading. Muslim leaders are increasingly denouncing terrorist attacks and numerous surveys and polling data in Muslim countries show that *al-Qaeda*'s support is ebbing.[25] Osama bin Laden complained shortly before his death about the "negative effects" to *al-Qaeda*'s image, and that *Jihadists* were under suspicion in parts of the world for "reneging on oaths, and perfidy." [26] Furthermore, according to excerpts released from documents obtained during the 2 May 2011 raid that killed bin Laden revealed him to be "a chief executive fully engaged in the group's myriad crises, [was] grappling with financial problems, recruitment, rebellious field managers and sudden staff vacancies resulting from the unrelenting U.S. drone campaign. In some

[24] Abrahms, "Strategic Influence Deficit of Terrorism," 151.
[25] Abrahms, "Strategic Influence Deficit of Terrorism," 164.
[26] Warrick, "Bin Laden's last stand," 2.

memos [bin Laden] worried about his own security, and in others he fretted about missing a huge potential marketing opportunity: the Arab Spring, with its millions of street revolutionaries looking to reshape politics in the Middle East."[27] Bin Laden wanted to incite "people who have not yet revolted and exhort them to rebel against the rulers."[28]

5.2 Recommendations

Western and other countries combating terrorism must exploit disputes and disagreements within *al-Qaeda*'s constrained mindset with its peculiar ideological interpretation of the drivers of strategy: calculations based on fear, honor, and interest. As Gabriel Weimann puts it, "The analysis of the online controversies, disputes and debates may tell us a lot about the mindsets of terrorists, their motivations and their doubts and fears."[29] Moving from a reactive to a proactive state is essential. Western security and counterterrorism institutions must have or develop the capacity to recognize and anticipate changes in *al-Qaeda*'s future modus operandi, recruitment, and targeting.[30] One example includes efforts within the United States Special Operations Command, the unified command responsible for military responses to terrorism, to integrate behavioral influence analysis into its planning processes.

The key of further undermining *al-Qaeda's* strength and influence, in order to speed its decline, is by delegitimizing, marginalizing, and painting *al-Qaeda* in the worst possible light. Such an approach would attack the group's fundamental goal of achieving honor, legitimacy, and viability as the Vanguard of the *Ummah*. Perhaps most importantly, nations combating *al-Qaeda* must resist the urge to overreact to inevitable acts of terrorism and this should become the policy watchword for all of them.[31] Instead, a more productive approach for countries is to aggravate existing tensions within and

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[27] Warrick, "Bin Laden's last stand," 2.
[28] Bin Laden as quoted in Lahoud, *Letters from Abbottabad*, 49.
[29] Gabriel Weimann, "When Fatwas Clash Online-Terrorist Debates on the Internet," in Forest, *Influence Warfare*, 33.
[30] Bruce Hoffman, "Foreword," in Forest, *Influence Warfare*, ix.
[31] Schmitt and Shanker, *Counterstrike*, 275.

between groups, further encouraging infighting and fractionalization within the *al-Qaeda* movement.

Another approach that countries should exploit further, to undermine *al-Qaeda's* communication strategy, is to downplay *al-Qaeda*'s actions. This approach would make the group's actions much less sensational and it has the potential to reduce their fame and honor.[32] Attacks on *al-Qaeda* member's personal reputations, denying them desired glory and publicity, could deter others from seeking glory in their communities through terrorism. Equally important is denying their family members the benefits obtained as a result of attacks, such as receiving material assets as a token of appreciation as a result of their kin dying as a martyr.[33] Nations must communicate via credible Muslim communication channels that suicide attackers will not enjoy heavenly rewards as promised by *al-Qaida* and that their families will be dishonored through their actions instead. This approach will aid in decreasing *al-Qaeda's* influence.[34]

Al-Qaeda's leadership can no longer effectively control its affiliates and disparate followers. The divergence between the central *al-Qaeda* leadership and its affiliates must be expanded. One central element in countering *al-Qaeda's* strategy is to keep up the pressure on *al-Qaeda's* central leadership in order to continue preventing effective centralized control. The key is to advance the disparity between what the leadership desires and what local recruits and followers actually do. If *al-Qaeda's* central leadership cannot control its affiliates, its grand strategy is doomed.

To achieve this, understanding how *al-Qaeda* uses the Internet and other media to conduct ideological debates, resolve disputes, and bridge gaps is fundamental to combating *al-Qaeda*.[35] This includes the reduction of online postings, since this portion of the communications strategy has influence on the number of foreign fighters and donations. If potential *al-Qaeda* supporters cannot see the effectiveness of *al-Qaeda,*

[32] Atran, *Talking to the Enemy*, 484.
[33] Schmitt and Shanker, *Counterstrike*, 53.
[34] Schmitt and Shanker, *Counterstrike*, 58.
[35] Forest, *Influence Warfare*, xii.

they do not give their lives or provide financial donations, thereby reducing *al-Qaeda*'s flow of financial and human resources.[36]

There are limits to what Westerners and outsiders can do directly against *al-Qaeda* in the realm of communications. One indirect means to be exploited is countermessaging through Muslim authorities who are credible in the eyes of the majority of the *Ummah* after the killing of innocent civilians.[37] The most credible and therefore powerful communicator in discrediting violent ideologies and denouncing radical interpretations of Islam must come from Muslim religious leaders.[38] As James J. F. Forest rightfully notes, "*Al-Qaeda* and fellow *jihadists* fear fatwas more than bullets. … [they] can undermine and refute the *Salafi-jihadis* ideology."[39] The West, especially the US is to a certain extend a discredited messenger and has therefore only a limited ability of persuading Muslim audiences.[40]

Nations, particularly Western ones, will find it unproductive to contest master narratives and their rhetorical vision that they weave. Elements of the historically-grown narratives are deeply culturally embedded. The narratives must be combated at the bottom end of the vertical hierarchy, where they aim to connect to the personal narratives and cultural values of the audience.[41] As Scott Atran advises, "Radicalization itself, engages mainly from the bottom up, not from the top down. This, of course, is not how you stop terrorism today, but how you do it for tomorrow."[42]

Radical Islamic religious movements have peaceful and militant strands. The MB offers Muslims an opportunity to channel their grievances and frustrations in a nonviolent manner. This observation is also supported by James J.F. Forest, who notes, "Because the Brotherhood draws on many of the same sources of intellectual inspiration and religious justification as the *jihadists*, it is viewed by *al-Qaeda* as one of the primary

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[36] Schmitt and Shanker, *Counterstrike,* 149-150.
[37] Corman and Schiefelbein, "Communication and Media Strategy," 90.
[38] Aidan Kirby Winn and Vera L. Zakem, "Jihad.com 2.0-The New Social Media and the Changing Dynamics of Mass Persuasion," in Forest, *Influence Warfare,* 44.
[39] Forest, *Influence Warfare,* 18.
[40] Forest, *Influence Warfare,* 19.
[41] Halverson and Goodall and Corman, *Master Narratives of Islamist Extremism,* 195-196.
[42] Atran, *Talking to the Enemy*, 291.

threats to its long-term viability."[43] Consequently, but unsuccessfully, *jihadi* terrorists' have been claiming a role in the Arab spring to gain the population for their aims.[44] No matter how suspicious national leaders, and particularly Arab leaders are of the MB's goals and motivation, they nevertheless should support this organization in its attempts to offer a credible and legitimate democratic alternative addressing grievances and offering viable political solutions. Real change through the MB could further disaggregate the *Ummah* and stand in stark contrast to lofty, utopian, and ultimately unachievable aspirations through violence advocated by *al-Qaeda*.

5.3 Conclusion

The empirical analytical framework based on Clausewitz's theory of war informed this investigation of *al-Qaeda*'s strategy and debunked potentially targetable vulnerabilities at the core of their strategy. The vulnerable points have been identified along with the critical links of ends, ways, and means that transcend across the levels of strategy. The investigation in this thesis has brought to light numerous disconnects and contradictions between *al-Qaeda's* military and communication strategy and its organizational control further enabling nations fighting the group to sever the critical links between its ideology, actions, messages, and audience. Clausewitz's theory of war aided in determining how best to attack *al-Qaeda*'s strategy as depicted in Figure 3.

[43] Forest, *Influence Warfare*, 18.
[44] Rania Abouzeid, "How the Arab Spring Made Bin Laden an Afterthought", *Time World*, 2 May 2011, http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2068931,00.html#ixzz1V6Zy4Ryp.

Figure 3. CLAUSEWITZIAN ATTACK ON *AL-QAEDA*'S STRATEGY
Source: Authors' Original Work

Al-Qaeda must have some degree of strategic progress before it can make history by achieving grand strategic ends.[45] Thus far, *al-Qaeda*'s line of reasoning and approach, which are identifiable through its master narratives, have not come to fruition. The *al-Qaeda* leadership has no effective control over its affiliates. *Jihadi* terrorist attacks have not brought *al-Qaeda* any significant strategic successes, nor have they helped in reestablishing an Islamic Emirate let alone the much-desired historical Caliphate. The group's grand strategy does not effectively translate to its actions at the strategic and tactical level. At times even the most spectacular tactical successes have thus far not resulted in achieving any of the group's significant strategic or grand strategic aims. Even more, due to the lag of control of the tactical attacks in conjunction with the media work, the indiscriminate killings of Muslims are alienating the *Ummah* in a devastating manner in terms of *al-Qaeda's* grand strategic ends. Lagging effective central control to strategically readjust or mitigate its affiliate's blunders, a*l-Qaeda* is becoming slowly irrelevant.

The findings of this thesis show that *al-Qaeda*'s terroristic strategy and its interlocked communication strategy is inherently flawed, limited, and ineffective as a coercive strategy designed to achieve political aims. However, it is impossible to totally

[45] Ackermann and Duvall, *A Force More Powerful*, 496.

eradicate *al-Qaeda* by military means alone. It is not possible to silence all and forever the voices of misguided minorities, nor find 100 per cent of all terror cells.[46] However, without publicity and organizational control, which is the oxygen of terrorism as well as the backbone of its communication strategy, *al-Qaeda* will eventually be its own biggest enemy and fade in the timeless horizon of history. Our goal must be to assist *al-Qaeda* in speeding up their own demise by effectively exploiting and attacking their legitimacy, credibility, and viability by exploiting the prime motivators of *al-Qaeda*'s strategic ends, ways, and means: its 14th century based ideology. Its ideology resonates only with a small minority of the Muslim population, but is founded upon the abuse of the Islamic bedrock of honor, fear, and interest of all Muslims. As Scott Atran eloquently stated, "[*Al-Qaeda*] … will likely extinguish itself altogether, doused by its own cold raw truth: It has no life to offer. This path to glory leads only to ashes and rot."[47]

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[46] Schmitt and Shanker, *Counterstrike*, 272.
[47] Atran, *Talking to the Enemy*, 484.

ACRONYMS

CTC-Combating Terrorism Center

MB-Muslim Brotherhood

MIT-Massachusetts Institute of Technology

OSC-Open Source Center

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APPENDICES

A. ABU MUS'AB AL-SURI PROTRACTED GUERRILLA STRATEGY

Abu Mus'ab al-Suri developed his strategy for a protracted war based upon Mao Tse-Tung's "On Protracted Warfare." Al-Suri outlines the conduct of guerrilla warfare in the following way:

> **The first stage: It is called the stage of exhaustion**. It is the stage of small guerrillas and limited terrorist warfare, where the guerillas, which are small in number, rely upon the methods of assassination, small raids and ambushes, and selective bomb attacks to confuse the enemy, regardless of whether the enemy is a colonial power or a despotic regime. The aim is to reach a state of security exhaustion, political confusion, and economic failure.
>
> **The second stage: It is called the stage of equilibrium.** In this stage, the guerrillas move to a stage of large, strategic attacks, and the regular forces are compelled to enter decisive battles which might lead to the disbandment of some of their units, and that part of their cadre, officers and soldiers join the guerrilla forces. A state of open confrontation is not yet reached, however, and the raids and the ambushes are the basis for guerrilla operations, even if they expand. At this stage, the guerrillas will carry out operations in which they will temporarily control some areas, in order to achieve important military, media-related, or political goals. They do not consolidate their positions, however.
>
> **The Third stage: It is called the end stage or the liberation stage.** At this stage, the guerrillas enter operations that are semi-regular and others that are regular, and they control some areas from which they launch operations to liberate the rest of the country. This happens after units from the regular army may have joined the revolutionaries or the guerrilla fighters, and after they have attained the tactical capability and sufficient level of armament to enter into open battles. Here small guerrilla units play an important role in carrying out operations behind enemy lines, to confuse the enemy forces by using guerrilla tactics.[48]

[48] Abu Mus'ab al-Suri citedquoted in Lia, *Architect of Global Jihad*, 471-472.

B. MASTER NARRATIVE: "WAR ON ISLAM"

With divine guidance and inspiration, Islam spread across vast lands and peoples like no other religion before it. From the earliest days after the Prophet's revelations, however, infidels have conspired against Muslims through nefarious machinations and deceit. Today, the *umma* is surrounded by enemies on all sides: *murtadd* (apostate) agents of the West plunder Muslim resources while allowing infidel troops in the land of the Two Holy Mosques (Saudi Arabia), Zionists slaughter Palestinian brothers and sisters while stealing their homes and livelihood, and American infidels drop bombs from the sky on Muslim women and children. Together, these enemies attack the *umma* not only with violence, but also with lies designed to weaken and demobilize Islam through cultural manipulation and media propaganda. They yearn to create a "moderate" Islam that is a diluted, secularized, and demilitarized shadow of the *umma's* former greatness. In the face of these enemies, Muslims must take up arms alongside their fellow mujahedeen and prepare themselves for the inevitable call to jihad. Only if Muslims heed this obligation will Islam deliver a crushing defeat against the forces that have conspired against the *umma* for centuries.[49]

C. MASTER NARRATIVE: "AGENTS OF THE WEST"

The *umma* was once led by the Righteous Caliphs, who preserved the true traditions of the Prophet and laid the seed for Islam's global dominance. This great generation of leaders distinguished themselves through their passion for *Sharia*, rejection of worldly excesses, and love for jihad. Muslims continued these traditions for centuries until traitors like Anwar al-Sadat betrayed the *umma* and initiated a tragic pattern of contemporary leaders putting greed before God, and the West before their own people. Today's hypocrite rulers knowingly betrayed the examples set by these model leaders and instead have chosen to follow the wishes of their Western masters, who order them to rape the wealth of their own countries, ignore the mandate to implement *Sharia*, and pacify Muslims by spreading the roots of laziness and idleness. These *murtadd* (apostate) tyrants are the hands, eyes, and feet of the West, which pollutes the faith with its falsehoods, steals Muslim oil while women and children starve, and humiliates Muslims for the benefit of the crusader cause. These corrupt apostates remain in power only thanks to their infidel supporters and the Muslims who neglect the call to jihad. The *umma* must awaken from its slumber and assume its obligation to wage jihad against these regimes. Only then will Muslim lands be rid of corruption, suffering, and the evil influence of the West. [50]

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[49] Open Source Center, *Master Narratives Special Report*, 12.
[50] Open Source Center, *Master Narratives Special Report*, 15.

D. MASTER NARRATIVE: "THE NAKBA"

Palestine has always been an integral part of Muslim territory. However, the Zionists conspired with Christian crusaders to forge an abomination state on Muslim holy land, the great *Nakba* (catastrophe) and a humiliating blight on holy soil. To this day, crusaders and Jews humiliate Muslims in the interest of Israel, supporting a holocaust in Gaza and orchestrating Muslim surrender at Oslo (Accords, 1993) and Camp David (Accords, 1978). Worse still, the secularist Palestinian apostates reject *Sharia* and care only for their own personal interests and those of their Zionist and American masters. These Zionist Arab defeatists willingly participate in a peace process that yields only suffering for Muslim brothers. Muslims everywhere must stand up to rectify this humiliation and restore the Blessed Land to its rightful people. Violent resistance to this great atrocity is the only way to stop the suffering of Palestinian brothers and sisters, and to show the oppressors that they should not dream of peace until Palestine is a Muslim land once again. Through this struggle, Muslims will ensure retribution for this great injustice perpetrated against the *umma*.[51]

E. MASTER NARRATIVE: "VIOLENT JIHAD"

Islam has always been a religion that embraces peace and shared prosperity. Despite this, the Prophet and his successors never shirked their duty to fight for the *umma* in a world filled with enemies and infidelity. As time passed, however, Muslims abandoned their duty to jihad and have invited suffering upon the *umma*. Muslims today need only look to the atrocities being committed against Muslims in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Kashmir, Somalia, Chechnya, and China to see that the *umma* is under attack. In the face of great enemies, the *umma's* sheiks have failed them when they are needed most as Muslims have put money before God and the façade of stability before the duty to their religion. If they continue to concede to evil, Muslims will have only themselves to blame as the crusader empire spreads across more Muslims lands. The *umma's* women, homes, and mosques must be defended against the crusaders' rampage—Muslims must rise to this call by taking up arms against Islam's enemies. Muslims are faced with a choice: let the house of Islam burn to the ground or rise up to defend it.[52]

F. MASTER NARRATIVE: "BLOOD OF THE MARTYRS"

During the time of the Prophet, mujahedeen readily plunged headlong into battle against the enemies of Islam and stood steadfast when selected for martyrdom by God, fortified by the knowledge that victory is only possible through sacrifice. Over time, however, the *umma* lost this fervor despite the relentless threat of its enemies, forgetting that the path to

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[51] Open Source Center, *Master Narratives Special Report*, 18.
[52] Open Source Center, *Master Narratives Special Report*, 21.

victory is paved with the blood of martyrs. Instead, the *umma* traded courage and faith for money and temptation. Today, Muslims ignore the path to martyrdom and fail to realize that embracing the desires of this world leads only to humiliation, loss, and dishonor for the *umma*. The time has come for Muslims everywhere to rekindle the fervor of their forbearers, to steadfastly embrace battle, death, and self-sacrifice against Islam's enemies, to fearlessly speak truth to tyrants, and to recognize that the happy one is he who God receives as a martyr. Those chosen for this path are touched by the divine and are rewarded for eternity. And with each new martyr, the *umma* moves one step closer to victory.[53]

G. MASTER NARRATIVE: "RESTORING THE CALIPHATE"

God established the rightly-guided Caliphate by uniting Muslims under the banner of Islam and *Sharia*, freeing the world from the *jahaliyyah* ("ignorance" predating Islam). This unification transformed lost desert tribes into leaders and scholars of monotheism. The Ummayad (661-750 A.D.) and Abbasid (750–1258 A.D.) states continued this noble work despite crusaders conspiring to destroy the Caliphate. After centuries, however, a Western scheme divided the *umma* into a multitude of torn pieces. The infidels took advantage of the *umma's* weakened and fragile state: crusaders marched toward Jerusalem, infidels conspired to divide Muslim lands in the Sykes-Picot Agreement (1916), and Zionists colluded to steal Palestinian land in the Balfour Declaration (1917). Muslim rulers allied with the West to stab the Ottoman Caliphate, allowing the godless Ataturk to destroy the last vestiges of the Caliphate for his Zionist masters. Today, apostate rulers continue to ally with the infidels to pollute Muslim minds with calls for nationalism and secularism. Muslims must join the fight toward the great goal of uniting the *umma* and establishing a Caliphate under *Sharia* from Morocco to Indonesia. Gradually and patiently, Muslims can rebuild the Caliphate brick by brick, putting an end to injustice and suffering, and restoring the *umma* to its magnificent glory.[54]

[53] Open Source Center, *Master Narratives Special Report*, 24.
[54] Open Source Center, *Master Narratives Special Report*, 27.